



Project 2

Chadar - Badar a puppetry craft of the Santals

Re-infusing tribal narratives with contemporary concerns

IDC, IIT Bombay

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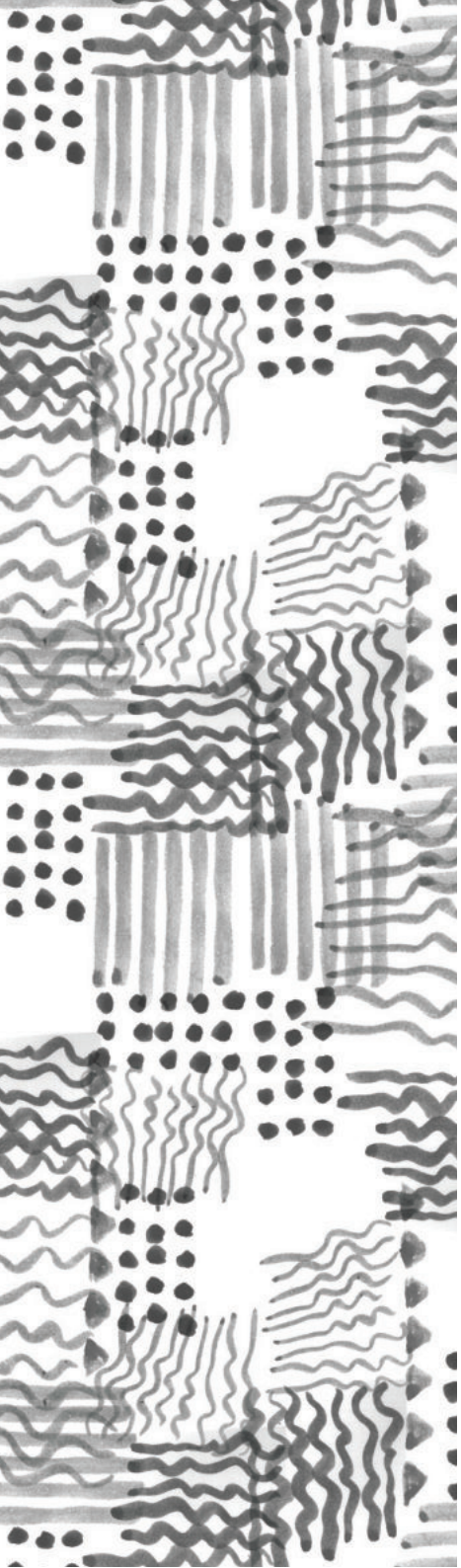
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Batch: 2014-2016

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Declaration

I declare that this written submission represents my ideas in my own words and where others' ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any data / fact / source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the Institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

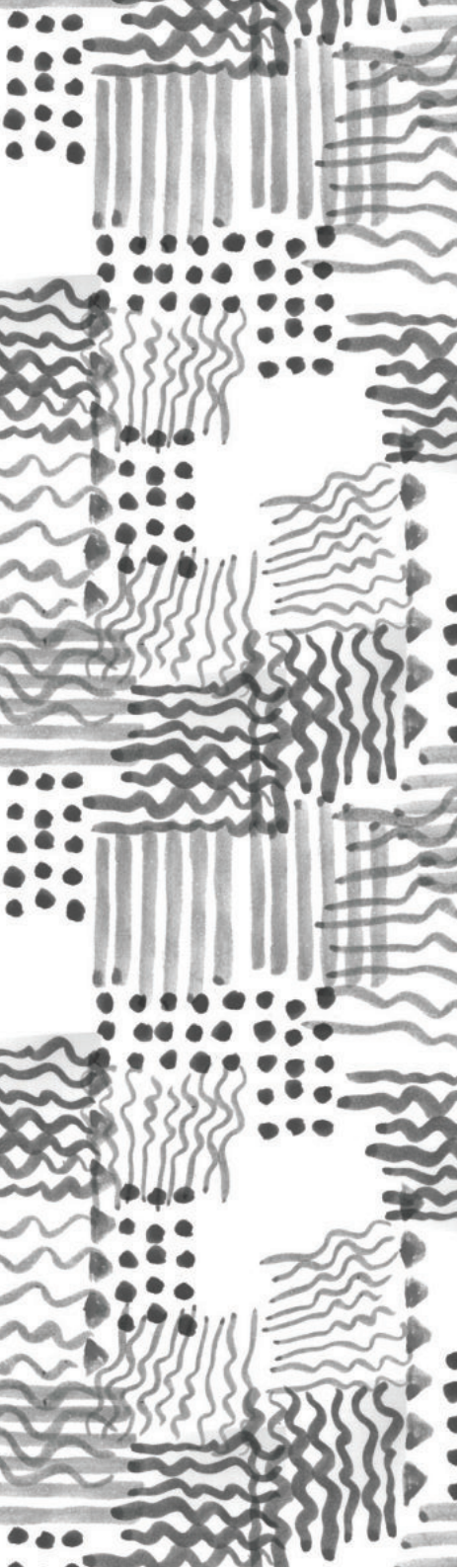
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Approval Sheet

This report entitled “Chadar Badar-
A puppetry craft of Santals” by Boski Jain
(146250006) is as partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of
“Master of Design” in Visual Communication.

Guide

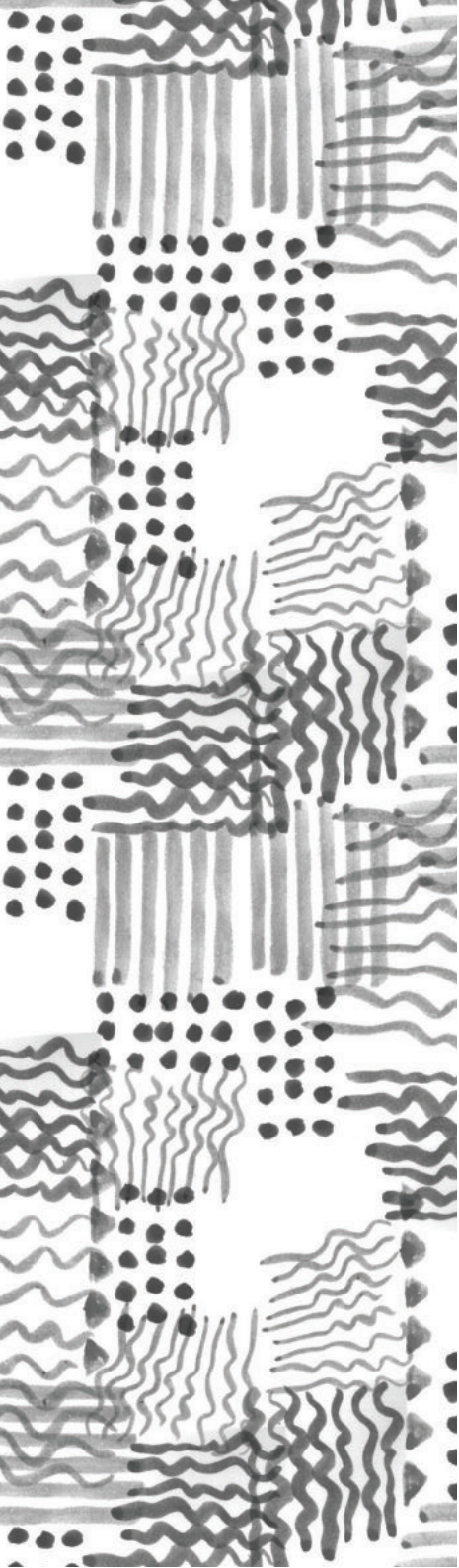
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Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all those who provided me the support to complete this project.

A special gratitude to my guide Prof. Raja Mohanty who invested his full effort in guiding me in achieving the goal. His stimulating suggestions and encouragement helped me to coordinate my project.

Furthermore I would also like to acknowledge with much appreciation the crucial role of the people whom I met during my visit to Bengal and Jharkhand, who agreed to spare their time and co-operate with my research. Neha, for helping me make sense of the reserch.

A special thanks goes to my friends in kolkata, whose combined efforts turned this project into reality.

Last, but not the least, all my friends at IDC who were a constant support system through out the duration of the project.

Name: Boski Jain

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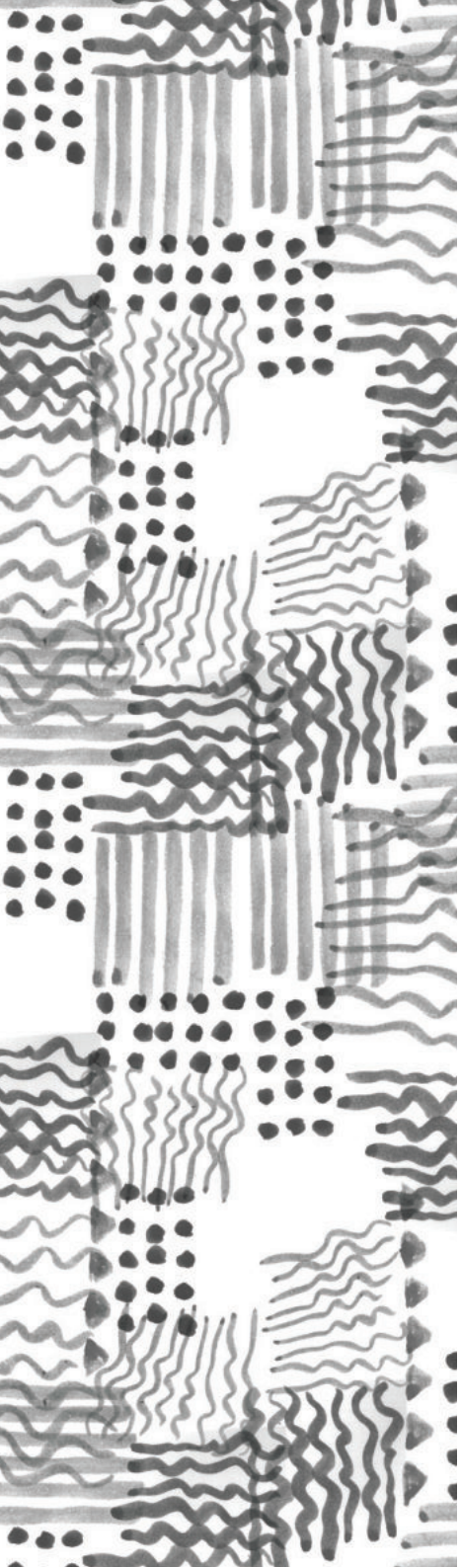


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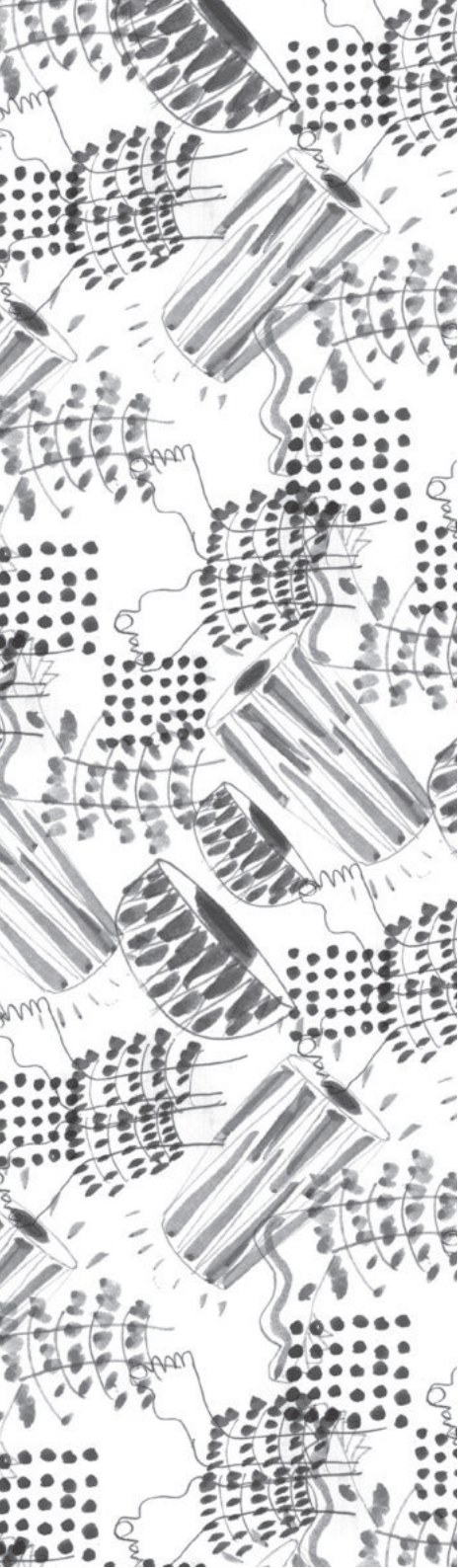
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Abstract

The project is about understanding what is happening to some traditions practiced in rural areas of India in this an age where 'development' often assumes an aggressive approach. This will be done through the context of Chadar Badar- a puppetry craft of the Santals. The project began with wanting to understand reasons for its decline, its relevance in the current times and the desire to preserve or recover this practice.

Questions that arose after understanding a field trip led to a closer scrutiny of assumptions underlaying the urge to 'preserve' this tradition.

The project seeks to express dilemmas faced both personally and collectively as our societies attempt development. This will be done in the form of a picture book.

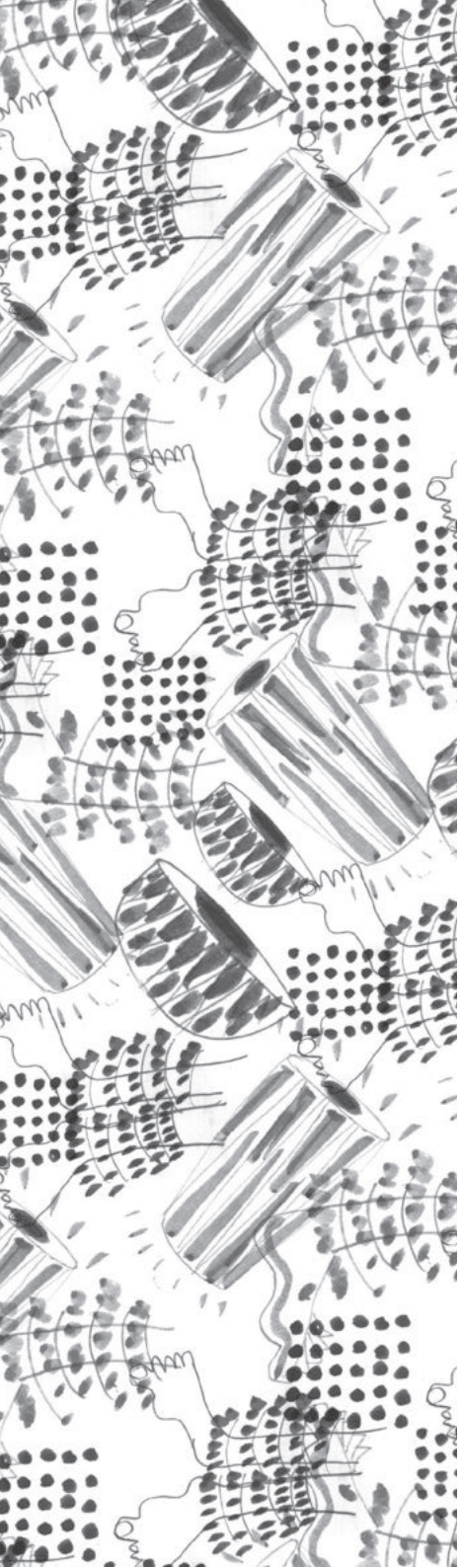
Methodology

- Not a quantitative or data driven approach.
- Talking to people about what they think is happening to this puppetry craft, what is happening to the villages and cities.
- Reading about examples of creative work that has come out as a result of the interaction of city people and village people.
- Writing about my journey through the project
- Summing up the journey of the project and what I learn from it in a story, that can bring forth different point of views and approach, of people to craftsmen including mine.



Introduction & Overview





Development & the tribals of India

Tribe is a social division in a traditional society consisting of families or communities linked by social, economic, religious, or blood ties, with a common culture and dialect, typically having a leader.

Origin of the word - from Old French *tribu* or Latin *tribus* (singular and plural); perhaps related to tri- 'three' and referring to the three divisions of the early people of Rome - *Ramnenses* (Ramnenses), *Tities* (Titienses), and *Luceres*. Greek usage- race or tribe of men, body of men united by ties of blood and descent, a clan.

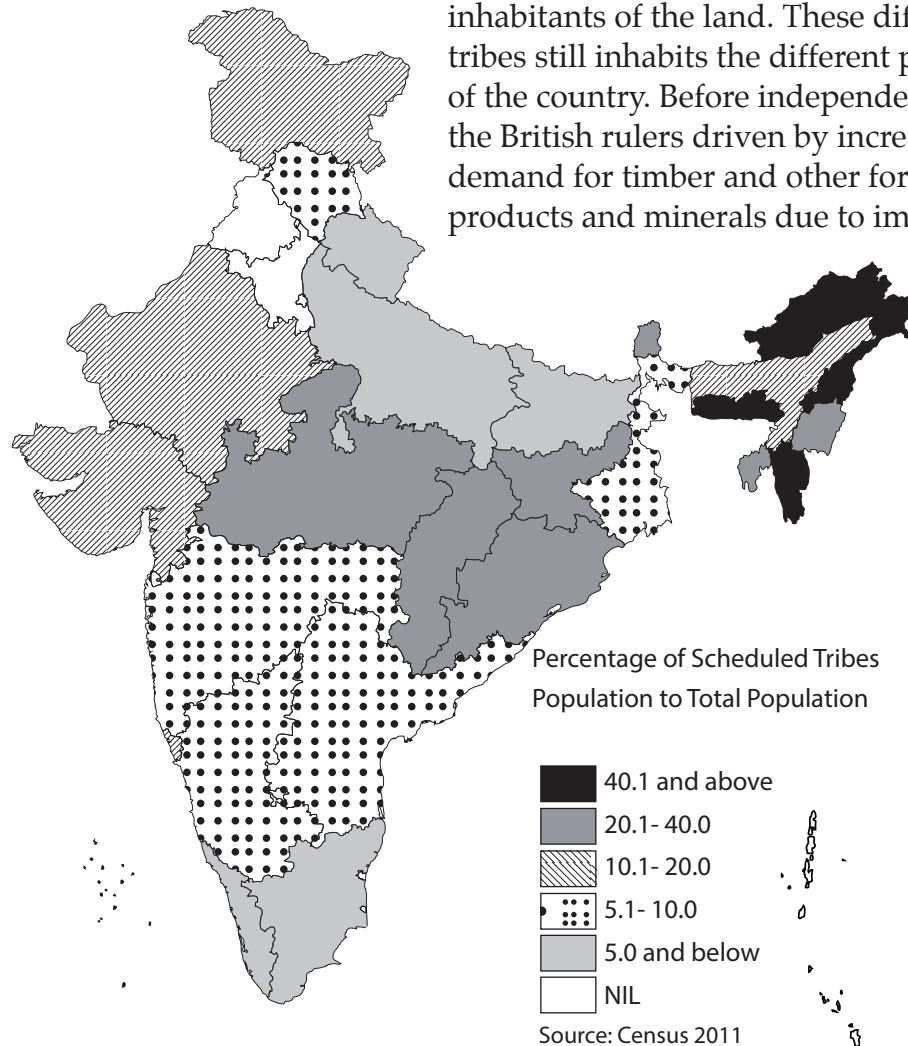
Tribal people, spread all over the world, form a significant segment of its population. They are called by different names such as 'primitive', 'tribal', 'indigenous', 'aboriginal', 'native' and so on. The distinctiveness of the tribes lies in their rituals, cultures, beliefs and above all the harmony in which they survive in unison with nature. Their living perfectly

depicts a well balanced give and take that in no way disrupts the ecological balance. They have a long and rich cultural past. But our knowledge about their origin and subsequent history is vague. Most of the account of these have been passed from generations as oral traditions, hence it is hard to chronicle their past. Since a long time, the greed to use natural resources for development and modernization, has caused much harm to these communities. Several times, justice have been denied to them.

Also, the idea of some people to preach and 'uplift' the tribal communities has caused decline of their culture. This has led to much unrest and agitation among the tribal communities all over the world. Although much debate has been happening about tribal rights, due to the rapid development of our world, their world is disappearing quickly.

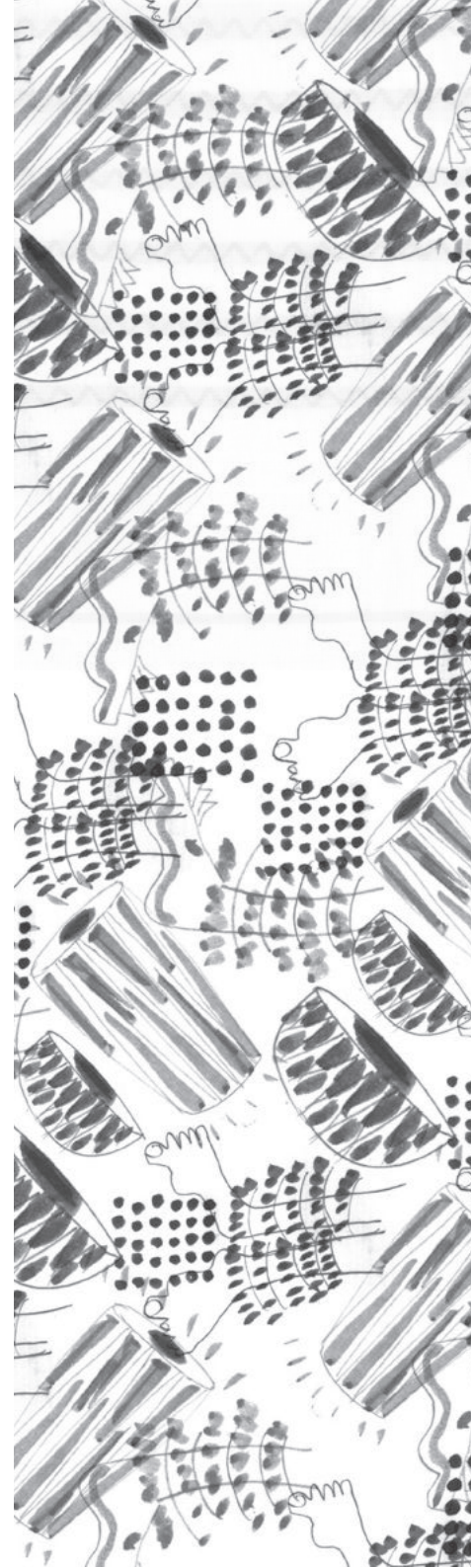
Tribal culture and traditions pervade almost all of the aspects of Indian culture and civilization. In India they are also called '*Adivasis*' - which means the first settlers. The aboriginals of India do not form a uniform race. They come from various parts of Asia and belong

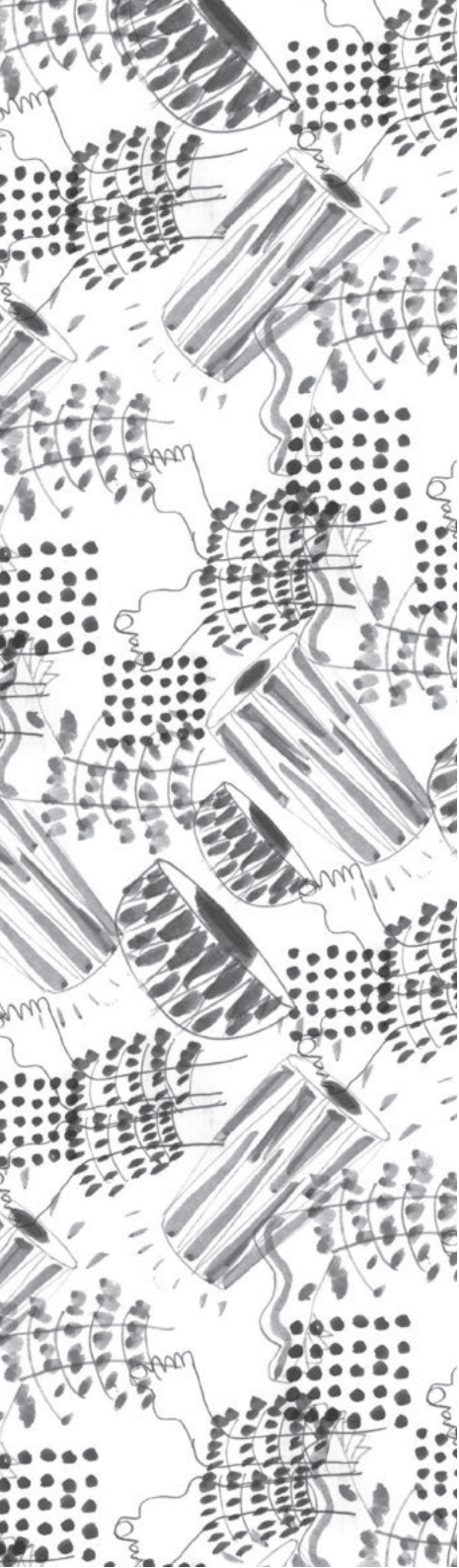
to various races. Each of them is a distinctive community either migrated from another place or the original inhabitants of the land. These different tribes still inhabits the different parts of the country. Before independence, the British rulers driven by increasing demand for timber and other forest products and minerals due to impulses



of industrialization in their own country, dispossessed the tribals of their rights on land and community rights on forest products by enactment of laws. The tribes who love peace perceived it an attack on their socio-economic and political systems, rose in rebellion against the alien domination through revolts. After independence, the constitution provided for provisions to protect the rights of the tribals. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry for Development of Northeast Areas, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes and Northeast Council have been created. But their exploitation did not cease, they continued losing rights over land, forest, air and water.

The word 'Scheduled Tribes' was added to the constitution of India in 1949. Article 342 says that only those communities who have been declared as such by the President through an initial public notification or through an amending Act of Parliament will be considered to be Scheduled Tribes. The essential characteristics, first laid down by the Lokur Committee, for a





community to be identified as Scheduled Tribes are –

- Indications of primitive traits;
- Distinctive culture;
- Shyness of contact with the community at large;
- Geographical isolation; and
- Backwardness

Tribals constitute 8.6% of the total population of the country, numbering 104,281,034 (2011 Census) and cover about 15% of the country's area. Adivasi societies are particularly present in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and some north-eastern states, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Some of the major tribal groups in India include Gonds, Santals, Khasis, Angamis, Bhils, Bhutias and Great Andamanese.

Tribal culture comprises dancing and singing amidst musical instruments, where art of chiseling out refreshing artifacts and painting or sketching were perhaps the order of the day.

The performing arts practiced by tribals have inspired people from cities also. Even though they continue to battle against all odds of modernism, these have moved ahead in unison to capture million hearts even worldwide.



Above: Meena women painting the exterior of their house.



Right above: Bihu dance from Assam

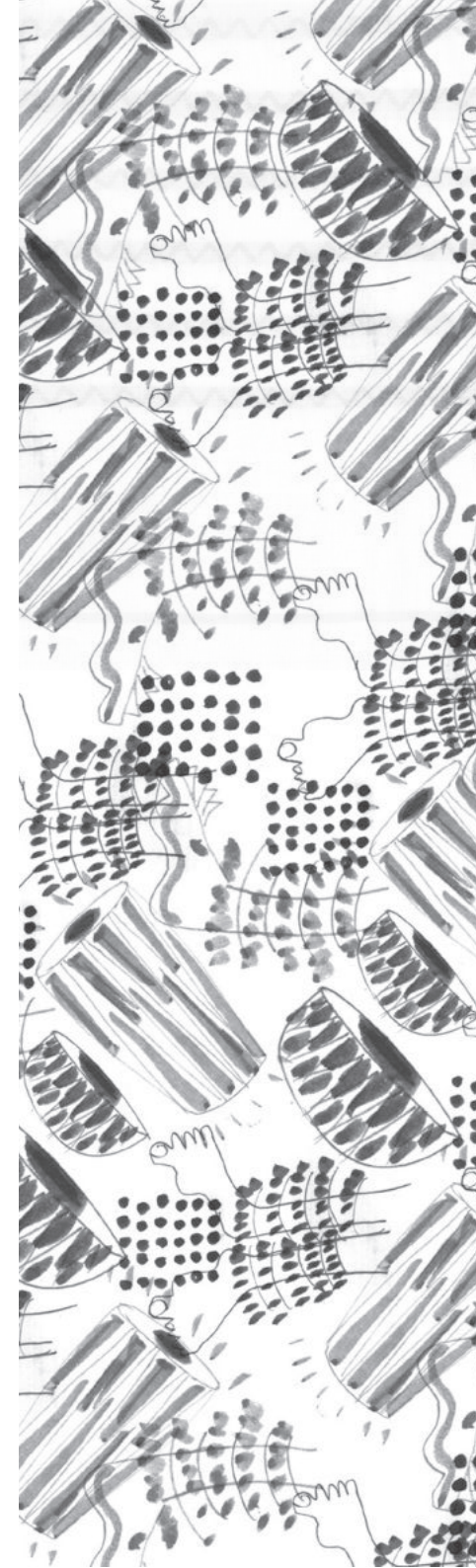
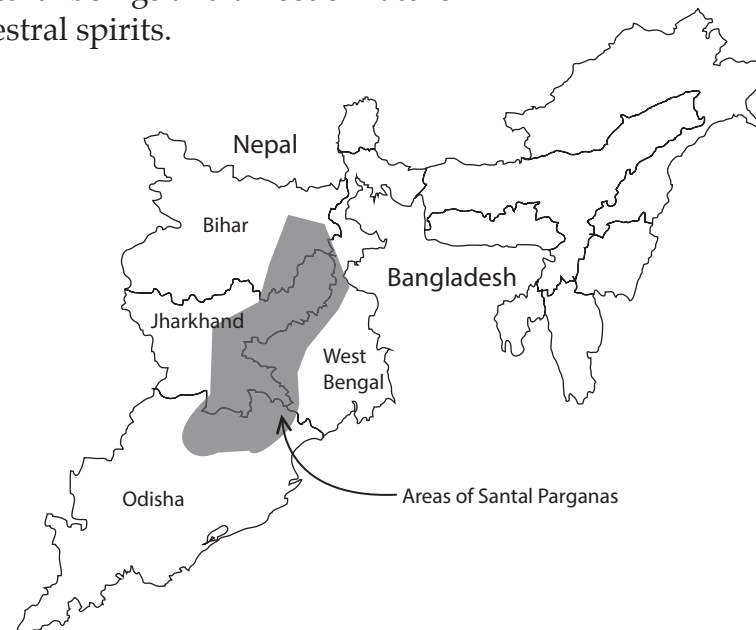
The Santals

The Santals are the 3rd largest tribal group in India. They are part of the Austro-Asiatic family, distantly related to Vietnamese and Khmer. The Proto Australoids can be identified with some facial characteristics such as low forehead, thick lips, wide jaw and wavy hair. Historians believe that they were the ancestors of the tribal community residing in the eastern part of India (excluding hill portions). The Santal language, Santali, belongs to the Munda (or Mundari) branch of the Austro-Asiatic language family.

The Santals are one of the largest ethnic groups in India. They occupy primarily the Chotanagpur Plateau, with their settlements distributed over an area of 350 miles, from the Ganges to the Baitarani. The *Santal Parganas* district is considered to be the heart of the Santal area. Beyond this region, the Santals have

spread widely in India as agricultural and industrial laborers.

Prior to the nineteenth century, the basic Santal subsistence pattern was hunting, but with an ever-increasing population and the rapidly decreasing game supply, the Santals have since turned to agriculture. Today, the Santals are predominantly cereal agriculturists, growing rice as their chief crop, and further supplementing this with millet, sorghum, maize, and some vegetable crops. Traditionally they believe in supernatural beings and a host of nature and ancestral spirits.



Creation myth

In the beginning there was only water and underneath it soil. First of all 'Thakur jiv' (Supreme God) created fishes, tortoises, crocodiles, earthworms, sun, moon and all kinds of living creatures of the water. Malin Budhi, a bonga, modelled human figurines from damp clay. But afterwards accidentally, they transformed into birds (Geese), from whose eggs the first man and woman were hatched.



Has and Hasil, the geese whose eggs brought the first humans to this world.

Santhal rebellion

The Santhal rebellion, commonly known as Santal Hool was a native rebellion in present day Jharkhand, in eastern India against both the British colonial authority and upper caste zamindari system by the Santal people. It was led by the four Murmu Brothers - Seedo and Kanhu. It started on June 30, 1855 and lasted until January 3, 1856. The courage and sacrifice of the Santals were countered by the British with butchery. Out of 50,000 Santal rebels; 15,000 were killed by the British Indian Army.



A commemorative postage stamp on 'Sido Murmu - Kanhu Murmu' issued on 6th April 2002.

Denomination INR 04.00

Left: A Jadu Patua
representing the Baha festival
Top: Sohrai Painting



Performing arts

Santals have a rich cultural heritage that revolves around their religious celebrations. Despite the waves of migrations, invasions by the Mughals and the British, influence of Hinduism and Christian missionaries and urbanization, they have been able to preserve this culture. A lot of their celebrations accompany singing and dancing. The names of Santal dances are derived from the ritual itself. For example during Sohari (festival of cattle and harvest), the Sohari dance is performed. Similarly, festivals of Baha and Karam have their own dances. The typical dance of Santals is swaying group of women with interlocked hands forming a semi circle, encircling a male group of percussionists. Some of the musical instruments that accompany their dances are Tamak and Tumdak (drums), Tiriao (flute), Junko (ankle bells) and various kinds of Banam (Fiddles). Santals are spontaneous singers and dancers. Their songs and dances reflect their collective nature, community feeling and social ties. Santals have rich traditions of visual

arts too. Some examples - Sohrai is the art of harvest festival in autumn, using red, black, yellow and white earth. Large votive images are painted with twigs on the walls - bulls, horses with riders, wild animals, trees, lotuses, peacocks, and horned deities. Sohrai paintings are considered to be paintings which bring good luck. The Jadupatua artists make the narrative scrolls called the Jado depicting their creation myths and scenes from the after life. Originally drawn from natural inks & colours, these paintings are believed to have magical and healing powers. They are used as visual aids for story telling. This is a languishing art. Efforts are continuously being made to revive it.



Chadar Badar

This is a unique form of puppetry done on a set with a long pole as base. Rows of beautifully carved wooden puppets dance in formation with the pull of a string and attached mechanism. It depicts the actual dance performed by the Santals in their daily lives.

It has a square fixed frame with a canopy and a circular platform on which two rows of puppets are fixed facing each other. A hollow bamboo attached at the bottom serves as a stand. A string runs through the bamboo and is tied to all the puppets. When played, the circular platform rotates and the heads and hands



Image Source: Cadence and Counterpoint

of the puppets move. A player performs the show by singing accompanied by pulling and pushing of the string that makes the puppets move.

The puppeteers are part time performers, otherwise engaged in agriculture or other occupation. They usually perform for four days, during Durga Puja – Saptami (7th day) to Dashmi (10th day). A set of Chadar Badar consists of 11 to 17 wooden puppets arranged on the floor of a wooden platform, below which is a mechanism for their manipulation. A piece of cloth is tied around to hide mechanism. This could be a possible reason for the name 'Chadar Badar', as Chadar means cloth. The puppets consist of female dancers, male drummers, jokers, birds etc individual puppets, which vary to some extent from set to set, do not have any links to mythology. They are all everyday characters.

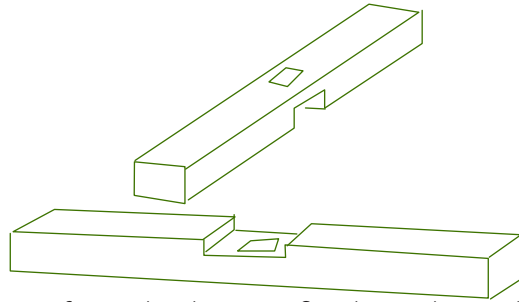
Puppets can be made with any soft,

smooth wood. They are painted over or dressed in cloth scraps, paper, foil, beads and feathers. In most cases, only the top part of the circular platform shows while a cloth hides the mechanism. The puppets are operated by the means of single cord. The puppeteer uses his foot to tug the cord at the beat of the drums.

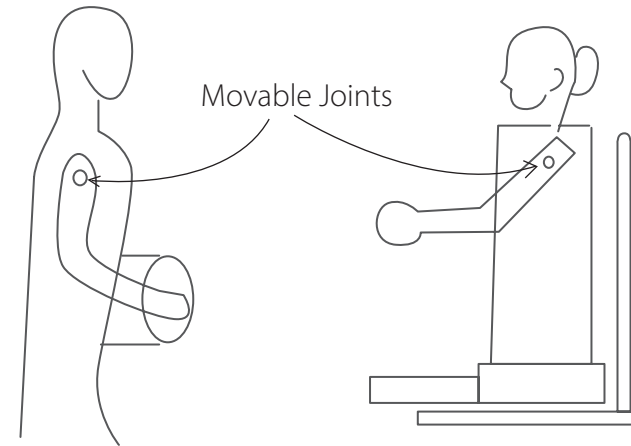
The performers may be a troupe of 5 to 7 members. They set up in front of individual houses, moving from house to house until everyone has had a chance to see the act. A single performance lasts from 5 to 15 mins. Money, paddy, rice and dal are the main form of payment. These are collected at the end of the performance in baskets brought along for the purpose. The songs sung with the performance are simple, usually sung in daily life. One may hear women sing these songs on their way back home after a day's work.



The Structure of Chadar Badar set

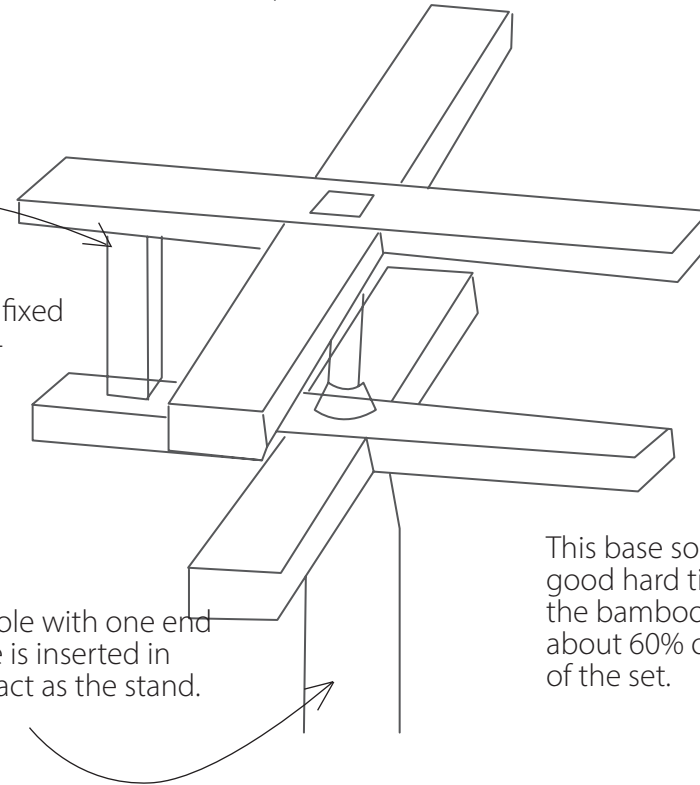


2 pairs of wooden bars are fixed at right angles with a square hole running through them.

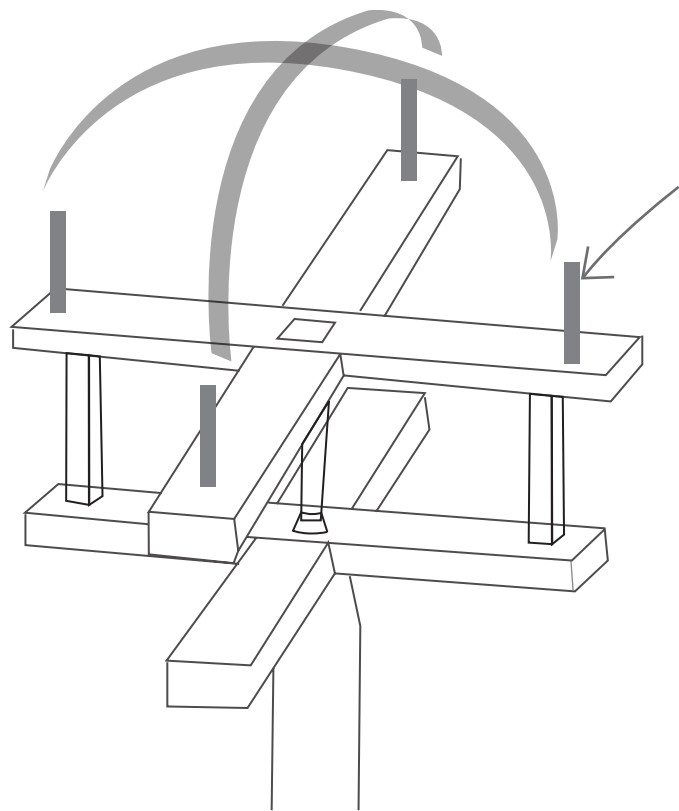


The 2 pairs are then fixed to each other with 4 supporting bars.

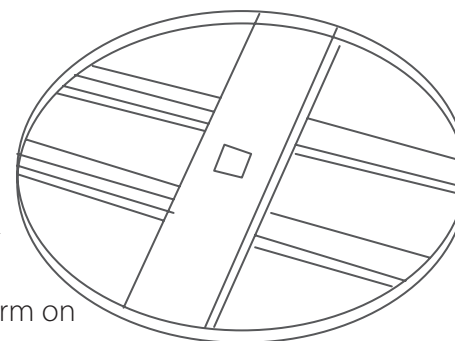
A strong bamboo pole with one end carved into a square is inserted in lower part. This will act as the stand.



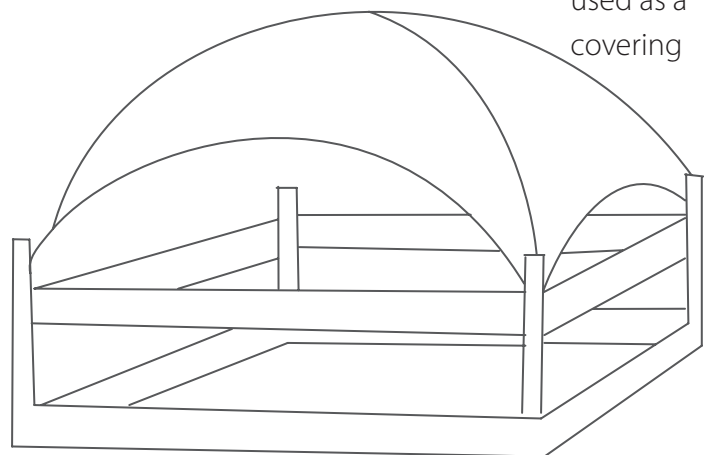
This base solidly made with good hard timber, excluding the bamboo accounts for about 60% of the total weight of the set.



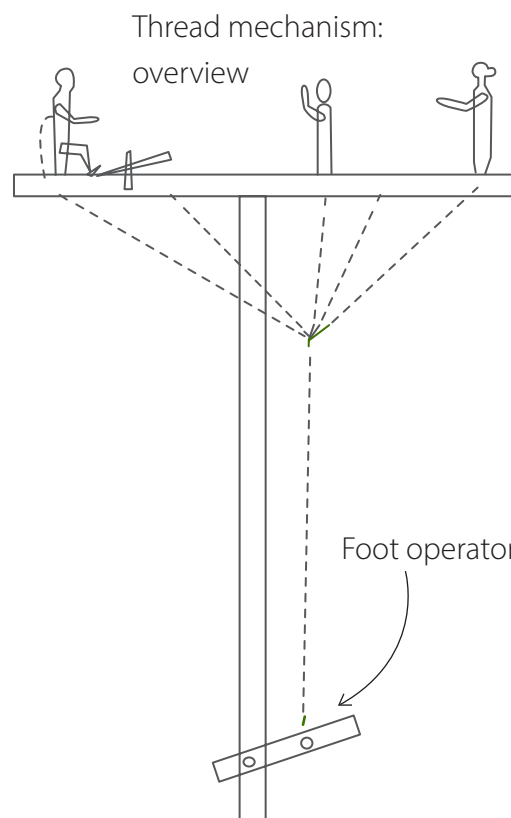
Four split bamboo pieces
2 long flexible bamboo
branches are bent and
tied.



Circular platform on
which puppets are
mounted

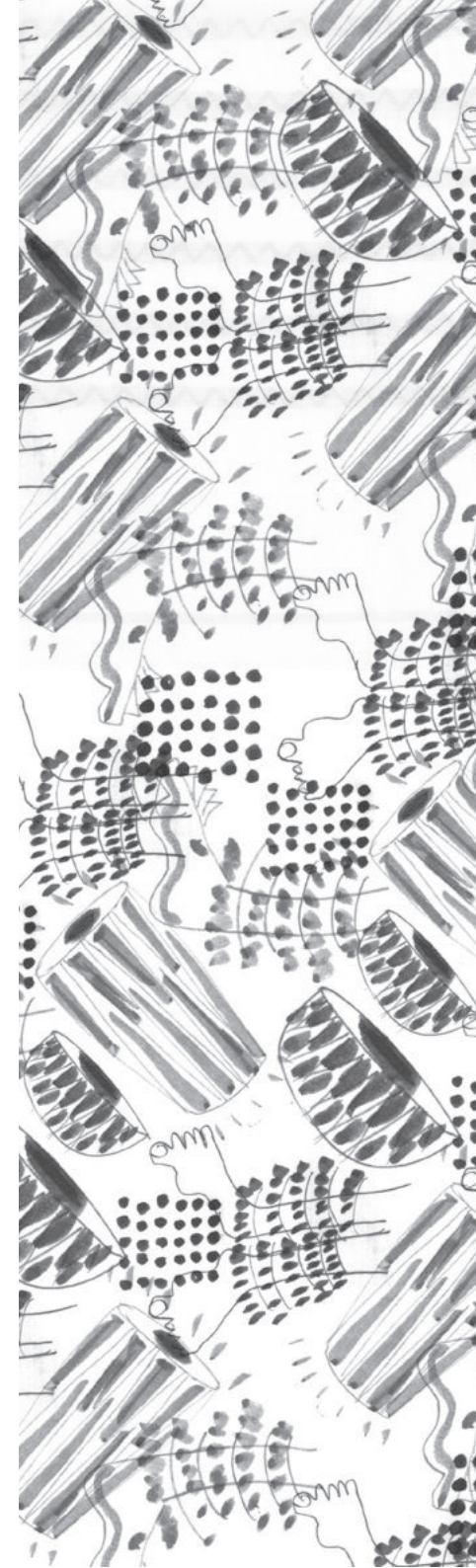


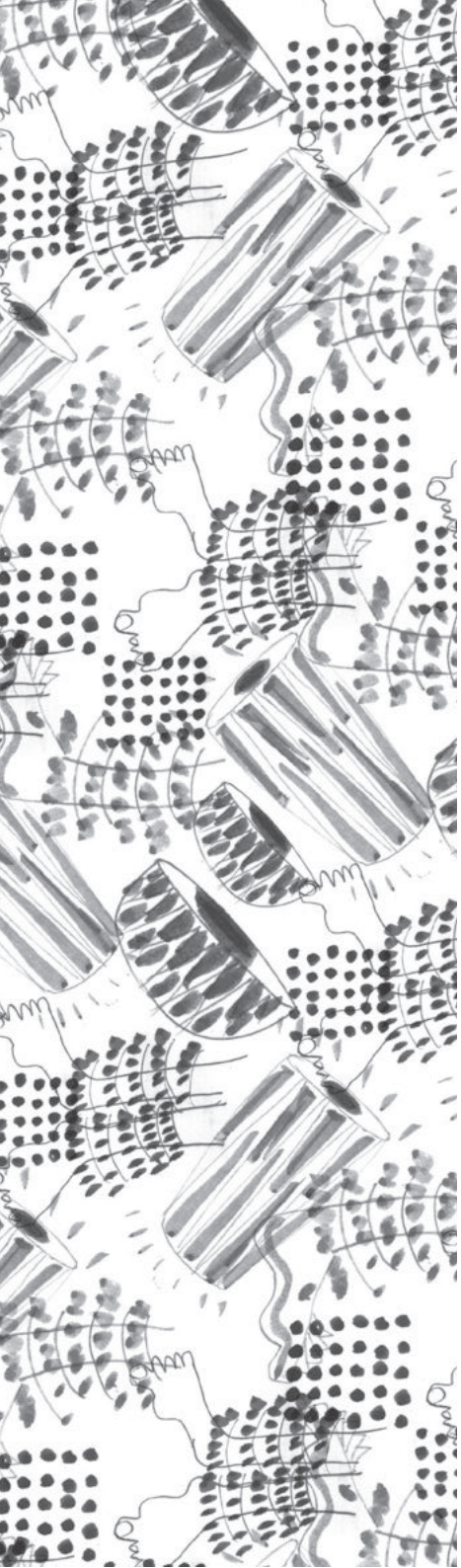
A cloth canopy
used as a
covering



Thread mechanism:
overview

Foot operator





A Visit

After reading much information that books and Internet had to offer, for a first hand experience of Chadar Badar, and to understand its current situation, a visit was made to the home of chadar badariyas. I travelled to the districts of Birbhum (West Bengal) and Dumka (Jharkhand).

I was able to work out this trip with the help of my friends in Calcutta. They were to go to Birbhum, to take English language workshop in a small school. A 3 hour train journey from Calcutta, brought us to Rampurhat station. Then a taxi ride of about 30 minutes took us to the edge of the village. Here, the school became our home for the next 4 days. Children (Santali and Bengali) from the villages around come to this school that takes care of them while the parents are away working in fields or quarries. Besides breakfast, bath, lunch, an afternoon nap and some evening snack, the children are given basic mathematics and language lessons.



I tried to talk to the local people about Chadar Badar. But little did they know. Out of all the people I interacted with, few had seen a performance, about a decade ago, rest had not seen it at all. But it did act as a reality check for me and gave me new perspectives for my approach.



“Tribals live on resourceful lands & that becomes their doom.”

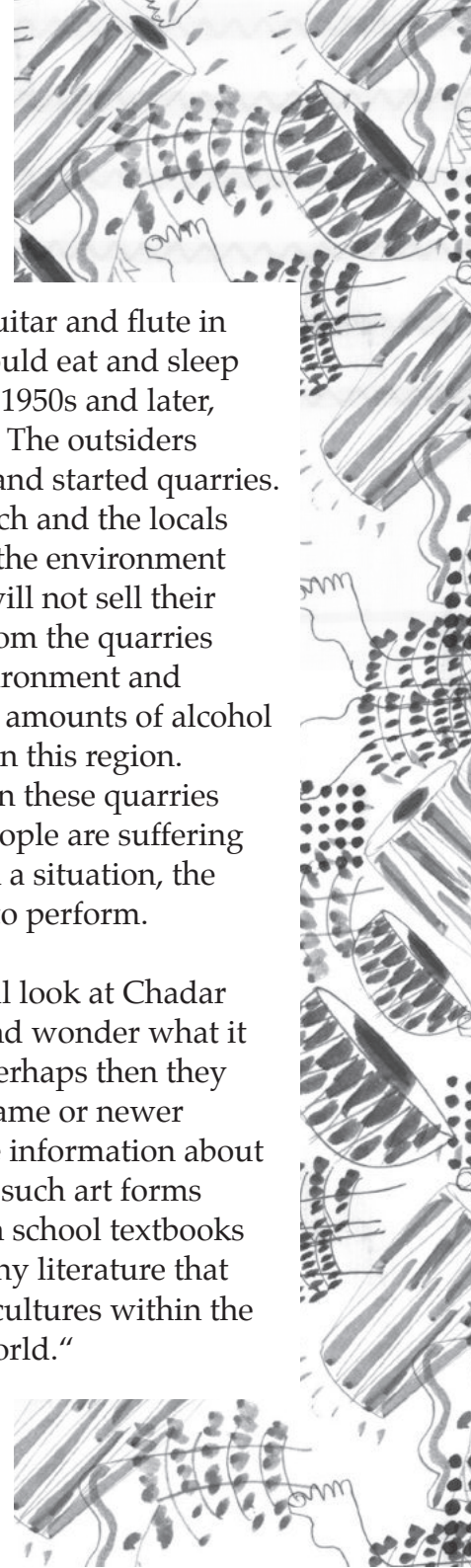
Mr. Roboy, in his 30s, is a resident of a Santal village in Birbhum. He works as a social worker and an editor of a local news paper. His grandfather was a Chadar Badar artist. Roboy first performed, with his grandfather at the age of 15. His last performance was in the year 1995, which means he has not performed in the last 20 years. Talking about the current situation of the art form, he admits that it is not popular among people now. There are better means of entertainment available. Since they traveled on foot, the chadar badar artists did not cover a large area, people of regions visited by the artists perhaps

got bored of the same songs or performances. “Some things from heritage after dying completely, come back to life.” He says. “Currently, even people from our own region don’t know about this art. It won’t survive in the coming days. It will be restricted to the museums. But sometime in future, it will return.”

Further discussing the reasons for decline of the art form, he says that people will accept things if they are happy, well fed, have fun and take rest. Then they interact with others and laugh. But these traditional systems of the tribal people are dying. In the 1940s, the tremendous potential of this region for basalt rocks was realized and stone quarries were established. As time went by, the number of these quarries kept on increasing. Prior to that, these regions were green. There was a surplus in agricultural supplies. People happily worked in

their farms, played guitar and flute in the evening. They would eat and sleep peacefully. But in the 1950s and later, the joyous life ended. The outsiders (businessmen) came and started quarries. They are becoming rich and the locals are suffering. Unless the environment is damaged, people will not sell their lands. But the dust from the quarries is destroying the environment and consumption of large amounts of alcohol is corrupting people in this region. Working long hours in these quarries is tiring and many people are suffering from silicosis. In such a situation, the artist find it difficult to perform.

“In future, people will look at Chadar Badar in museums and wonder what it is.” He concludes. “Perhaps then they will rediscover it in same or newer form. Meanwhile, the information about this art form or other such art forms should be included in school textbooks and study books or any literature that talks about different cultures within the country and in the world.”





"There's more in ourselves
dancing and playing than
in puppets."

Seeing black berries, custard apple,
banyan fruit,

And drinking water from the ponds
we've grown up
And drinking water from the ponds
we've grown up

Our village is on lush mountains and
green lands
Has been decorated with leaves and
roots
Rumblings sounds from above and
rustling of leaves below
That's how we live with everything that
has life.

My house, forest, birds are my brethren
Whatever flowers bloom—our flowers are
trees are beautiful
We all co-exist."

Baburji Kisku, a resident of a village in
Birbhum, has been audience to Chadar
Badar himself. But that was long time
ago. On my inquiry, he simply says that
TV and radio have replaced the means
of entertainment. So why would people
listen to Chadar Badar.

As I insisted him on more details of the
craft, he recalled a few songs:

"Our village is on lush mountains and
green lands
Has been decorated with leaves
and roots

Similarly, Sonamumi Murmu, another
resident from Baburji's village recalls:
"We're the chadar-badarni dancers,
Really, going from door to door.
From door to door dancing and calling to
be watched
and be joined in song and dance"

Sonamumi says, "Two people manoeuvre
the chadar badar set. One holds the set
and cloth covering it and one pulls the
strings and other contraptions to make
it move. There's one who has a basket
with other items, such a sal leaves which
also operates as a mouth singing-calling
people to watch and finger and hand
puppets. They go from door to door
playing the cadar badarni's.



"Look at the human
made of wood
Look how beautiful it is
We are all same as these
One day we all will die."

Mr. Ashok Singh recalls a song.

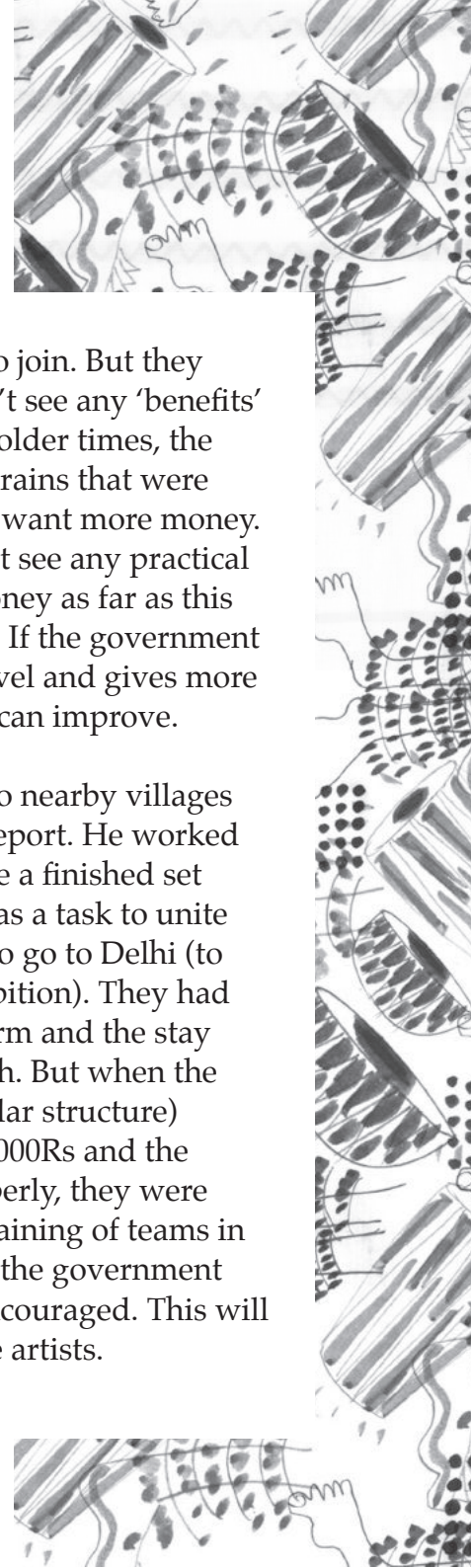
Mr. Ashok is the founder of *Janmat Shodh Sansthan*, an organisation based in Dumka, Jharkhand. Its primary objective is to conduct studies of tribal culture in Jharkhand. Mr. Ashok has published a report about Chadar Badar in 2010. Some of his thoughts about Chadar Badar are as follows.

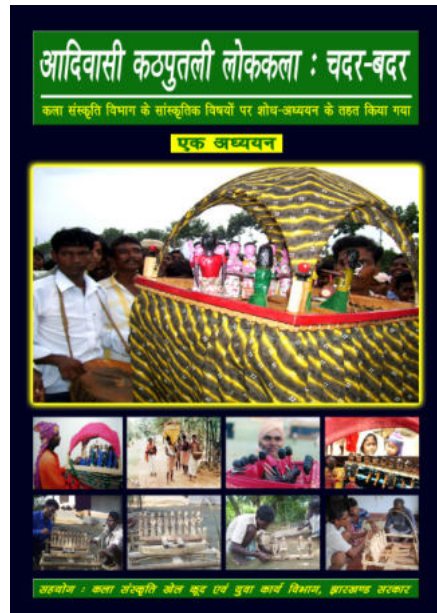
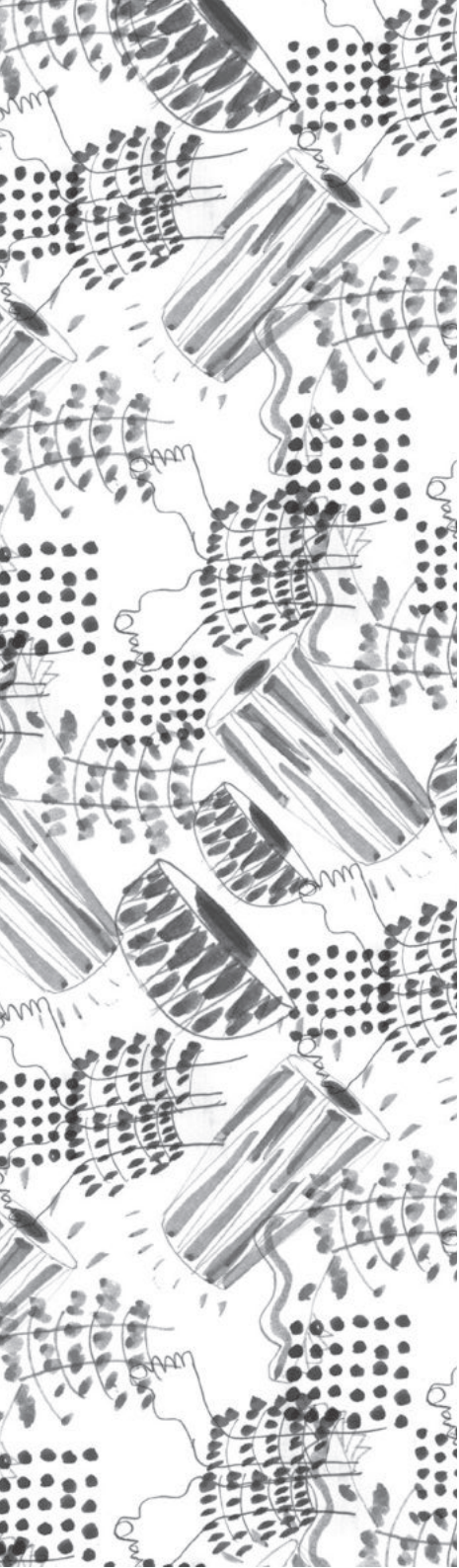
The time of the year when these artists travel is from Bhado to Durga Puja. The entire troupe consists of men. They visit individual houses as well as fairs and collect money, maize and rice. "Tribal society is far from modern techniques

and yet the traditional techniques themselves are remarkable." He says while explaining the mechanism. One thread moves about a dozen puppets and that makes it different from other puppetry art forms in India. The art and culture department of the Jharkhand Govt. has been working to save these this technique and these artists. It aspires that every block in Dumka district should have a team of performers. Workshops were organized to carry out this task. But the newer generations are not interested in these traditions. During one of the workshops, a lot of young

people were invited to join. But they didn't last. They didn't see any 'benefits' (meaning money). In older times, the benefits were all the grains that were earned. But kids now want more money. Big money. They don't see any practical possibilities of big money as far as this art form is concerned. If the government takes it to a greater level and gives more opportunities, things can improve.

In 2009, he travelled to nearby villages while compiling his report. He worked with the artist to make a finished set of Chadar Badar. It was a task to unite them convince them to go to Delhi (to participate in an exhibition). They had lost hope in the art form and the stay was to last for a month. But when the structure (Chadar Badar structure) was sold for about 35000Rs and the artists were paid properly, they were encouraged. Hence training of teams in different blocks, with the government support, should be encouraged. This will bring new hope to the artists.



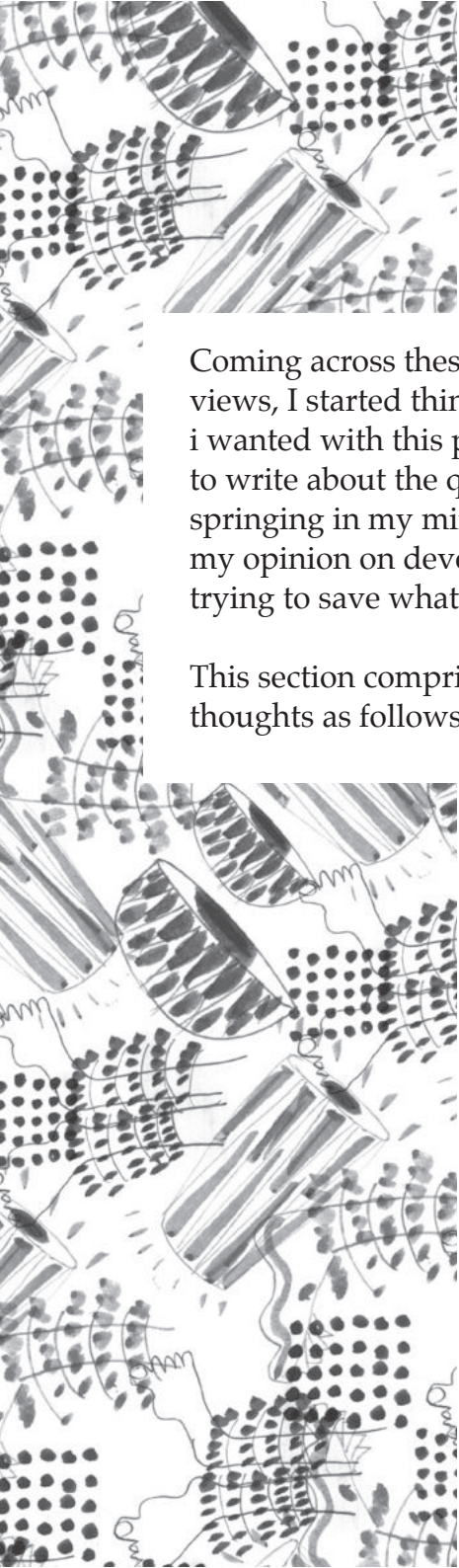


A few images from the report on Chadar Badar published by Janmat Shodh Sansthan.





Analysis



Coming across these different point of views, I started thinking about what i wanted with this project. I decided to write about the questions that were springing in my mind, about what was my opinion on development, death, and trying to save what is dying.

This section comprises of some of these thoughts as follows.

What does development mean?

Development has been stated as one of the reasons for the depletion of this art form and many others. The word develop literary means to progress, to grow. Derivations of this word are coined over countries with different levels of wealth, progress and growth. If a person stops using a clay chulha and shifts to a LPG stove, it can be called development. Or shifts from a 3BHK to a penthouse it can be called development. Or acquires 3 new companies then that is also called development.

The overall equation of any developing country is to provide infrastructure, food, shelter and employment to its people with its limited expenses. All of this requires recourses, both material and human. Everybody works hard to put together these resources and convert them to usable provisions. But the benefit of all this hard work is not distributed equally within people. Some people benefit, some don't. There are people worrying about increments and promotions and then there are people

worrying about a proper meal a day. How do we deal with this problem? How did the developed countries deal with this problem? Is it always a fact that for some people to progress, some others will suffer? Is this natural? Is this our interpretation of the theory of 'survival of the fittest', and elimination of the rest. People are busy fulfilling these goals without knowing what is the end. What is this urge to develop that has been with us since the beginning. It is definitely getting worse with time so where will it take us and at what cost?

Coming back to the project, development is costing the loss of an art form. Working long hours in stone quarries or moving to cities does not leave scope for singing or dancing. Within the scope of this project, some questions related to development will be dwelt upon. The final narration will try and include some of these or present a broad picture of what is happening because of development.

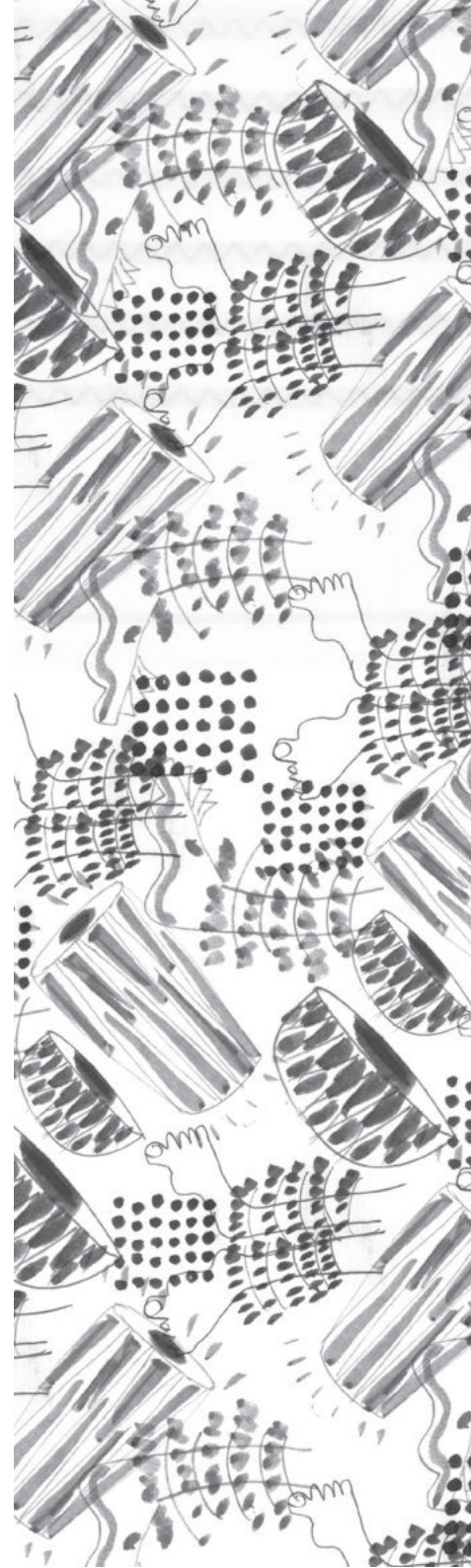
Nature of collaboration

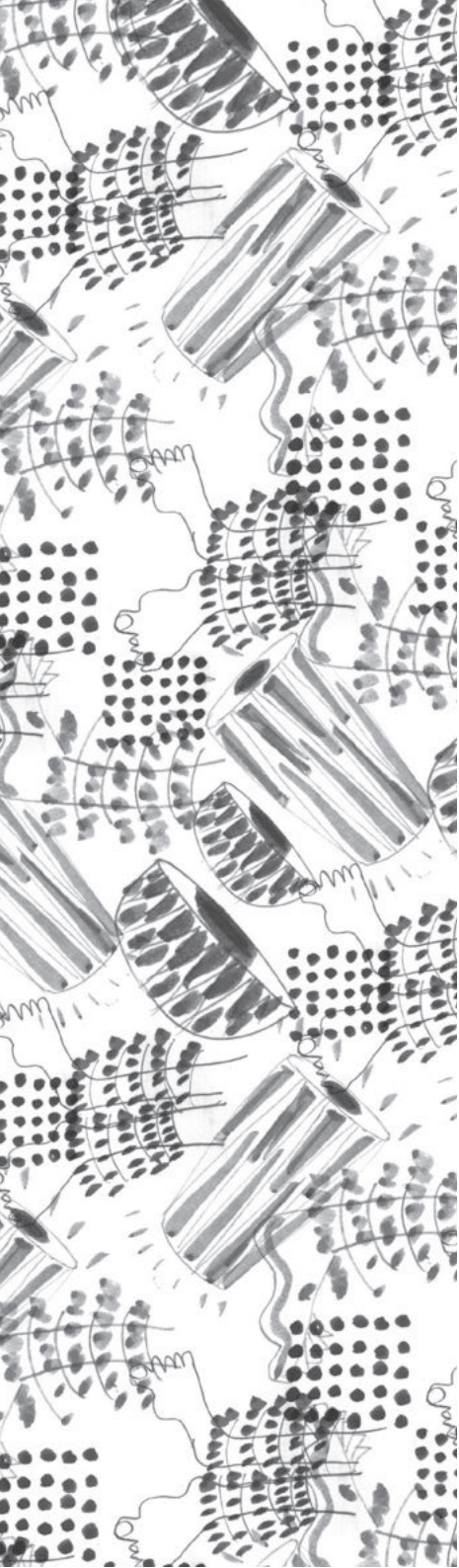
People work in collaboration. That's how the society works. And collaboration means a give and take relationship. Since a long time, people from the cities have 'collaborated' with the village or tribal people for some or other type of creative work. This project also falls in this domain. Hence it becomes critical to see what is exactly the nature of collaboration. The project started with a concern about a dying puppetry art form. But what can I, as a student, do within the academic framework to save it. As discussed earlier, the factors for the depletion of this and many other art forms are beyond our control to deal with. So what change can one project possibly bring in this situation. More importantly, how will the village people that I met be involved and benefit, if possible, from this project.

The first solution that one can think of is a collaborative performance. Bringing the performers to urban space like Mumbai and giving them a platform to perform.

But this, in my opinion raises a few more questions. Will one performance bring any difference to their situation? Will the narrative of the performance be contemporary to keep an urban audience engaged? If yes, then isn't that change itself taking the traditional art form away from what it used to be? And if no, would people in cities be interested in knowing how the village life works?

The other approach could be to not let the project become a narration of what literary the art form is, but what is my understanding of it. Yes, there will be little collaboration and more dwelling within my head in this process, but hopefully it will bring a fresh perspective to the situation. This seems more possible considering the geographical distance between my location and that of the artists.





Can one save what is dying?

This questions the very beginning of the project. Or before this project, many projects which have attempted to save a piece of culture that according to them, were dying. It can be seen as both, an emotional aspect of humans to not let go off things easily. To conserve, to preserve and be nostalgic about the past. Or the domineering aspect of humans: to take control. To become the commander and see to it that everything functions properly and justice is done to all.

The former is easily seen and experienced. From diaries, scrapbooks, photographs to documentaries, there is an intention to hold on to what has happened and needs to be preserved or looked at in future. And if possible, make others look at it too. The latter, does not seem obvious but is true. The English people went all around the world conquering territory after territory. Their mandate did not just tell them to conquer pieces of land but also to 'uplift' what they thought were the 'backward' people they came across. To rescue them from the indispensable doom that these people would lead themselves to if the British did not intervene.

The mandate of this project started as the former reason. Clearly to conserve a part of what is being lost. And the immediate questions that one faces are- What different can one project ring in the current situation of Chadar Badar? Can this project save what is dying?

Everything will perish. It's nature's rule. Human race is not the same as it was 1000 years ago. Our ways of living have changed. Our habitats have changed. Clothes, education, technology... everything has changed. And this will continue. Change is inevitable. So why this need of trying to hold on to the past traditions.

As written earlier in this report, in many cases, the means of entertainment changed from puppetry to radio and televisions. Did it happen for good? It is not fair on the part of this project to make a plea to people re-adapt what they have left behind. Is it ok to modify its existing form to make it more interesting for people. If yes, then modify it to what extend. Or is it ok then, to present it to a fresh audience.

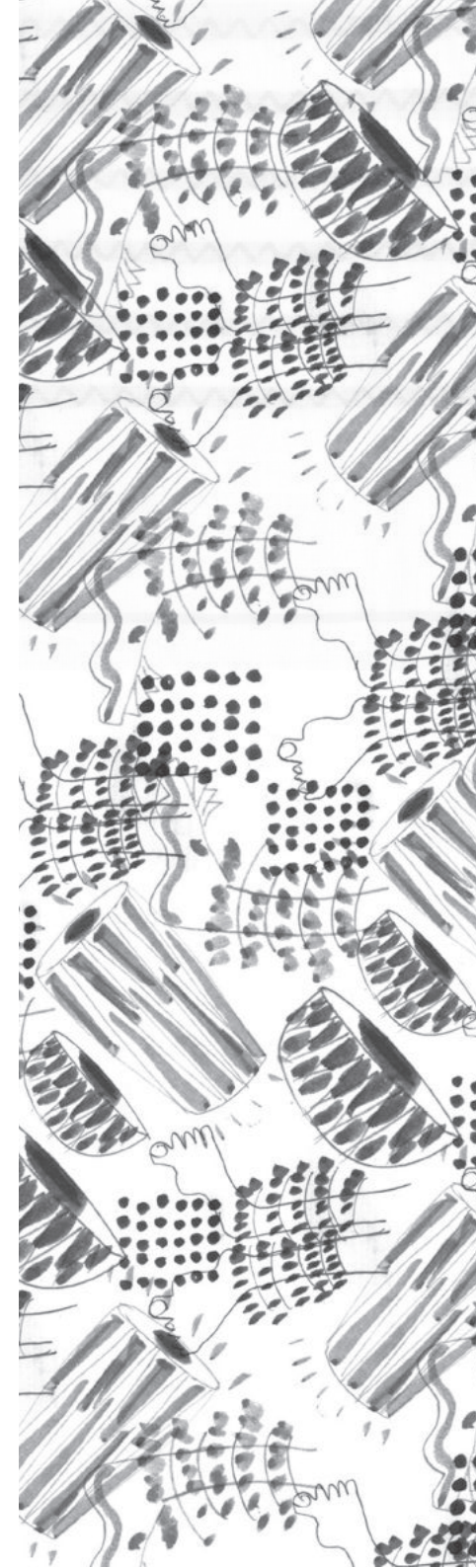
Past is our identity

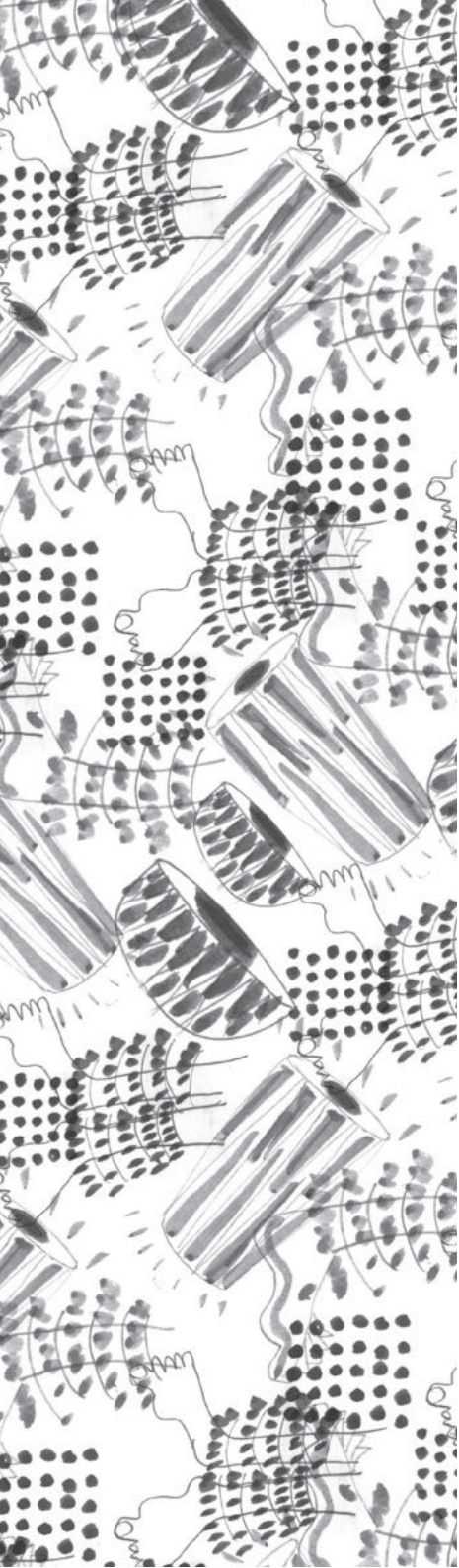
As much as the idea of leaving the past behind and moving ahead sounds convincing, we tend to go back to it. No doubt our ways of living have changed over the years. But a lot of traditions still remain as a part of our lives. It is this part of our lives that we, a lot of times, identify ourselves with.

Since childhood we are conditioned to know and appreciate the fact that India is a land of varied culture and traditions. This is also how we start identifying ourselves as Indians. Our traditions and customs give us a line that distinguishes us from the rest of the world.

At community level, these traditions are like a legacy or lineage that keep reminding every generation about their ancestry. It is always intriguing for people to know where they come from. Where they belong. And they don't want to let go of it. But again, is it true for everybody? Does everybody get a fair chance to hold on to even parts of

the culture that is being practiced since generations. As seen in case of the Santal villages where Chadar Badar is practiced, people were traditionally farmers. Their customs, festivals, celebrations revolved around farming. But slowly as the potential of the land in this area was realised, farms were turned to stone quarries. The farmers now go to these quarries and spend long hours breaking stones. Such a life style has made them leave behind some practices and customs. Was this change lifestyle willful or forced? What happens to the question of identity in this situation? Is it even relevant anymore? People belonging to the same tribe can change professions. They can change locations. Should that mark the end of them being a part of that tribe. This brings us back to the question of evolution and adaptation. People will change to adapt to contemporary times. And yet they want to hold on to the past. If not themselves, then others want to do it for them.





Can we learn from the past

A common answer given in any kind of discussion on 'Why do we need to learn history?' is that we can learn from our mistakes in the past. Or that it enriches our knowledge about what events can lead to what consequences.

In the context of this project, now a days, as we call them- the days of crises, are full of concerns. Suddenly human race has realized that there has been tremendous exploitation of the what nature has to give us. But with the ever increasing population, increasing demand of food, infrastructure, shelter etc. there does not seem to be an immediate solution to this problem. Some people are appreciating the gain and some people are complaining about the loss. And again, does the need to conserve tradition arrive from such a concern? Could there really be an answer to some of these modern crises in the past? It is a broad question. The answer would be subjective. It will change from problem to problem, region to region, people to people. But it certainly raises hopes. We often tend to miss out some good examples of solutions that have been tried out in the past. {examples... water supply,} applying these to modern context can help us solve a few problems of modern crisis.

Similarly, can the purpose of a tradition of singing folk songs and making puppets dance be more. If we just look at it as a medium being used to spread a message. And so can it be used to spread a message which s relevant to the current times. But

will this message be? And to whom will it be directed?

Also in the context of this project, it is seen that certain art forms have survived so far as they adapted to contemporary themes and mediums.

For example Gond art, which has been practiced by the Gond tribe of central india. The same techniques, colours, style is now used to render modern marvels. Things like cars, aeroplanes, building etc can be seen in their paintings. These genuine interpretations of what is seen around is accepted by people.

What can people do

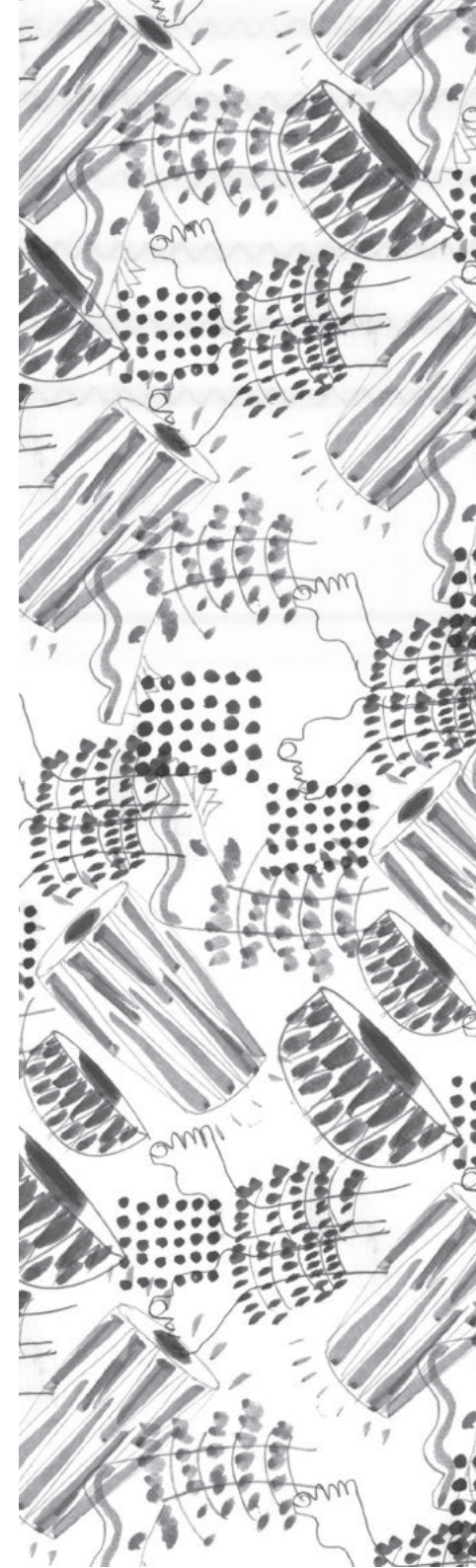
It is not that development is bad. It gives more and better opportunities to people to fulfill their aspirations. Of course it comes with a cost. And like many other factors we can easily coin development as another 'crisis of modern times' which does not seem to have an immediate solution. There are number of theories about renewable sources of energy, sustainable ways of living etc. that promise to save the day. And again there are theories to counter these theories.

As short term goals, everybody want them selves and their families well fed, and keep them safe. They don't want to worry about the crises of the world. Through my narrative, I want to talk to my generation or the generations soon reaching this stage of dilemma. Should they really care about the loss of certain traditions when are already burdened with survival in this competitive world. What bit can they contribute to help in this situation? They are not expected to mourn or be proud, but at least be aware of what is happening around them.

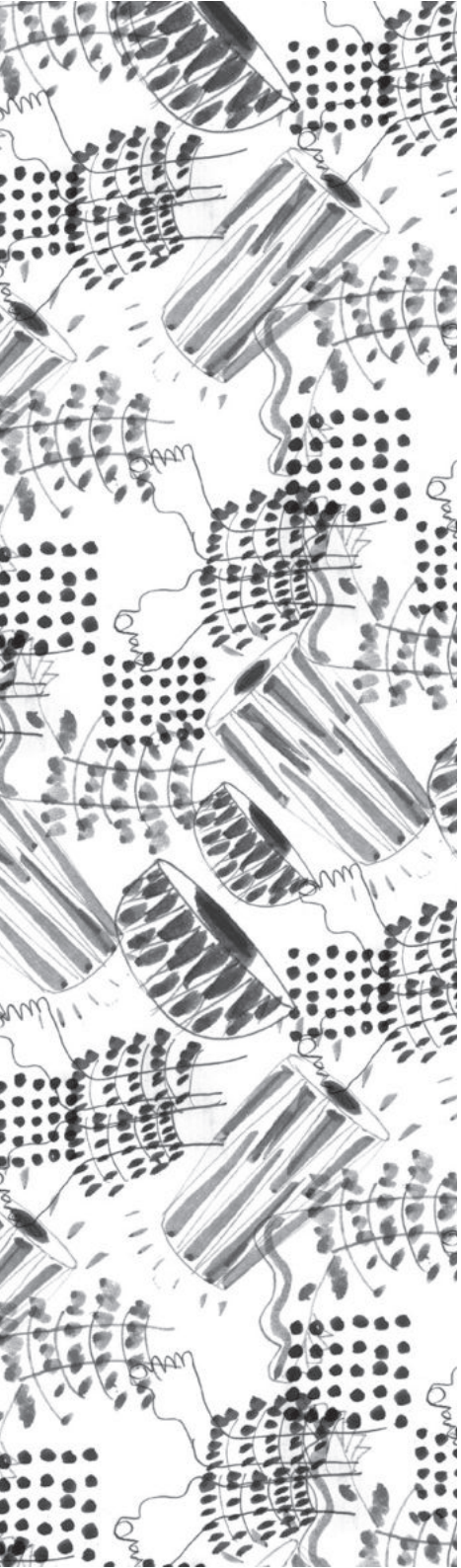
What is my understanding

To know what message can be conveyed and whom can it be conveyed, it becomes important to condense whatever has been dwelt about so far in this project.

1. There are good reasons for the loss of this traditional art form.
2. There has been a considerable amount of study done that documents this art form.
3. Both urban and rural spaces have their own contexts. Different kinds of interaction between the urban people and the rural people that affect life of both.
4. There is a tendency to save what is being lost or being forgotten. But this does not happen with everything around us.
5. People already know that the world is depleting. Is talking about it again putting more burden on their minds.
6. Some art forms have survived so far because they adapted themselves with contemporary medium, or themes.



Summing up
Thoughts and
Research



Story References

Looking at all that i had written, I was reminded of a few stories that have captured some of these thoughts. Looking at them helped me to list the qualities that I wanted in my narration.

1. The cycle's dream

Author: Prabhat Illustrator: Bidyut Roy

This story, in a few lines talks about aspirations and dreams. But then once they do come true, the eventual doom. It is a comment on the current world. How people want better lives but only to realize later, that the better life will not last forever.

2. London jungle book

Bhajju Shyam (art & text); Gita Wolf & Sirish Rao (editors)

A simple but interesting description of the city: London. It shows London as seen by a person living in village, who has not interacted with any urban space before. He uses metaphors of animals and natural environment that is common to him back at home. What makes the book interesting is the title. It is a witty reversal of 'Jungle Book' by Rudyard Kipling.

3. Drawing form the city

Tejubehan

Story of a woman who recalls her childhood. How her family moved from their village to a city. She talks about the struggle that their family goes through, change in their life styles, meeting her husband etc. Also, her interpretations of the modern marvels that she sees around the city.

4. Three little pigs

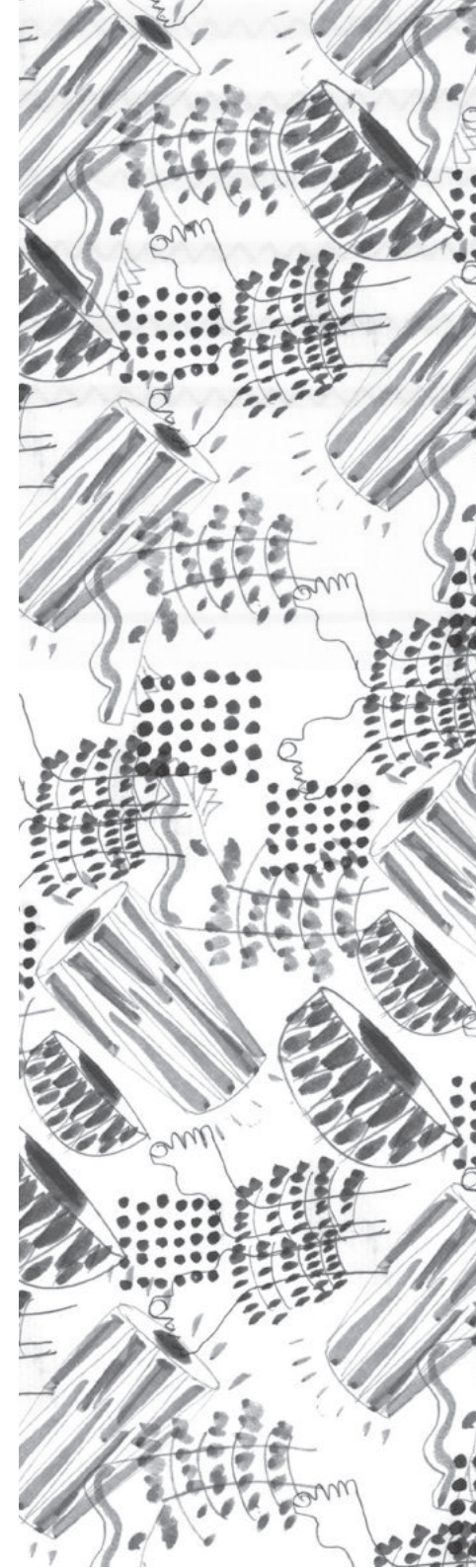
One of the classic fairy tales. Have heard this number of times since childhood. The story is about how a house made of concrete and bricks is able to save 3 little pigs from a fox who is trying to eat them as opposed to a couple of house made of hey and wood respectively. The story kind of supports the use of such building material as opposed to what were used earlier as a measure against forces of nature.

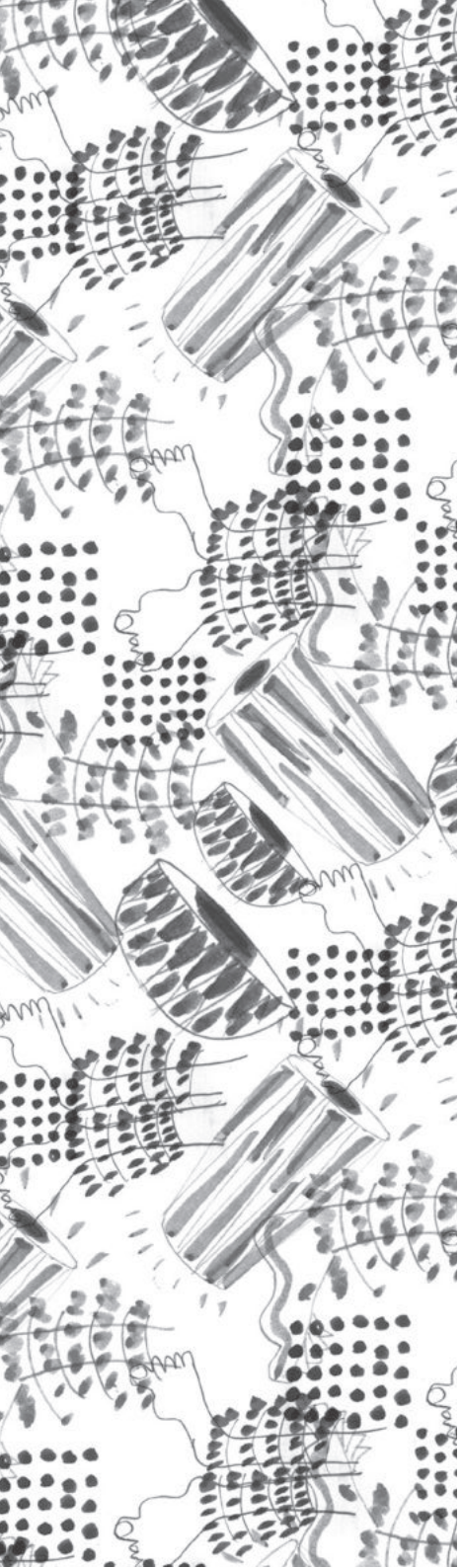
5. Country rat and city rat

Another one of classic fairy tales. It simply puts the living conditions of a city and village in direct comparison. The story concludes by stating that life in a village is more peaceful and in a city, is promising but stressful.

6. Runaway

2009 animated short film Cordell Barker. The theme is inspiring and very relevant to the project. A train, full of people, uncontrollably speeds towards its doom. It carries an important message. People can bargain or bribe different routes, as is shown by the exchange of money and goods between what seems like the business class and the commoners, but all ways lead to the same inevitable destiny. The movie shows this through a comical animation.





Elements of the story

1. Personal journey- the narrative can say what this project itself went through. It can talk about the different perspective with which this issue was seen. It can mention the people that brought these perspectives to notice. And more importantly, how, still there no conclusive end has been achieved about the concern that the project started with.
2. Changing life styles of people.
3. The give and take relationship between cities and villages or between people living in them.
4. Some questions- The narration can summarize some question that have come up during the journey of the project so far. some are answered, some remain unanswered. But to put forth these questions can trigger a thought in people.
5. Entertaining- As the roots of the project were in the study of a art form originally meant to entertain and spread knowledge about culture, the end product must have some elements of these. What ever is the message, it must be conveyed in the form of a story. One that engages people, and if possible, makes them aware of what is happening around them.
6. Physical form of Chadar Badar- The book can adapt the property of Chadar Badar puppets having movable joints. These are operated using a single thread. Each spread of the book can have a single thread that helps the reader to operate the puppets.
7. Bring some elements of the Santal culture like their belief in nature gods and ancestral spirits.

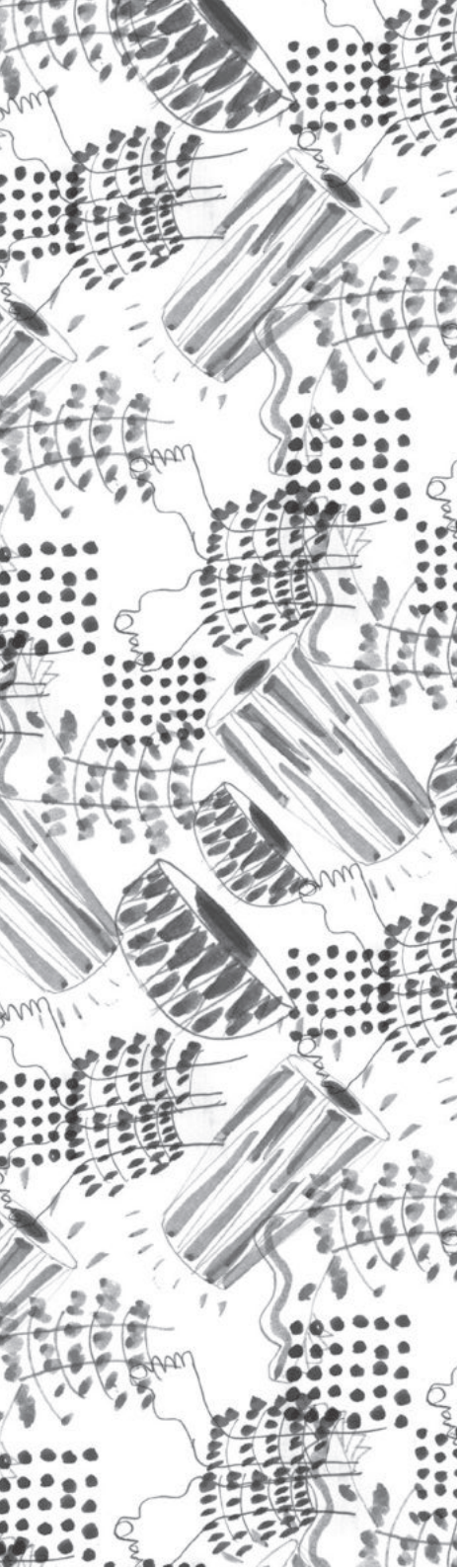
Story Concepts

1. A dense forest. Sound of somebody singing is heard. The source is a man dressed in dhoti, happily walking and dancing through the forest. He is carrying a number of musical instruments...percussions, small guitars, flutes. He is also carrying a few puppets by their strings. Suddenly he stops singing. He is surprised to see a stark clearing in the middle of the forest. He is figuring out what the matter is when he sees a strange man walking towards him. This man is dressed in a suit. Carrying a briefcase. He comes and introduces himself. He tells the singer that there is city in making in that clearing. A lot of work will be done.

As they have more conversation, they start exchanging goods. As they take things from each other, they start growing bigger and bigger. Until they can't grow any bigger. They stop but then only realize that by this time they can't move, they have traded everything around them, the musical instruments,

the buildings, the natural resources etc. So it's just these two huge, fat men, standing in the middle of barren land, unable to move. And that's when they realize that they should have thought before indulging in this kind of trading.





2. A group of puppets are lying in the corner of a house. They have been lying unused for a few years now. They are tensed and start having a conversation about their future. The conversation begins by one of the puppets who is conscious about his looks and dreads that since the puppets are not being used, he will grow old and die without performing. He asks his neighbor, 'Do I look old?', But the neighbor does

not know what old means so he asks his neighbor. And so the question keeps transforming to different forms through out the story. When it comes back to where it started, the question is completely different.

The entire conversation and the questions that have come up during the project can be put forth in the form of Chinese Whisper.



3. A young boy (or girl) decided to leave his village, go around the world and collect whatever is good or best and bring it back to his village. On his journey, he sees the most amazing marvels. What ever likes, he grabs and puts it in his potli. Finally it is time to return home. But the potli has become too heavy. He has to cross a bridge to reach his village but can do it with such a burden. So he gives up every thing he had collected and reaches home.

Or, he is towards the end of his journey, he loses his balance and tumbles down a hill. At the bottom of the hill, his potli opens and everything comes out. It sets up a small hybrid city on that spot where the boy starts living. But over the years he realizes that he cannot keep living this way. He decided to leave everything and return to his village. But as he reaches, he sees that the village has already transformed itself into a hybrid city.





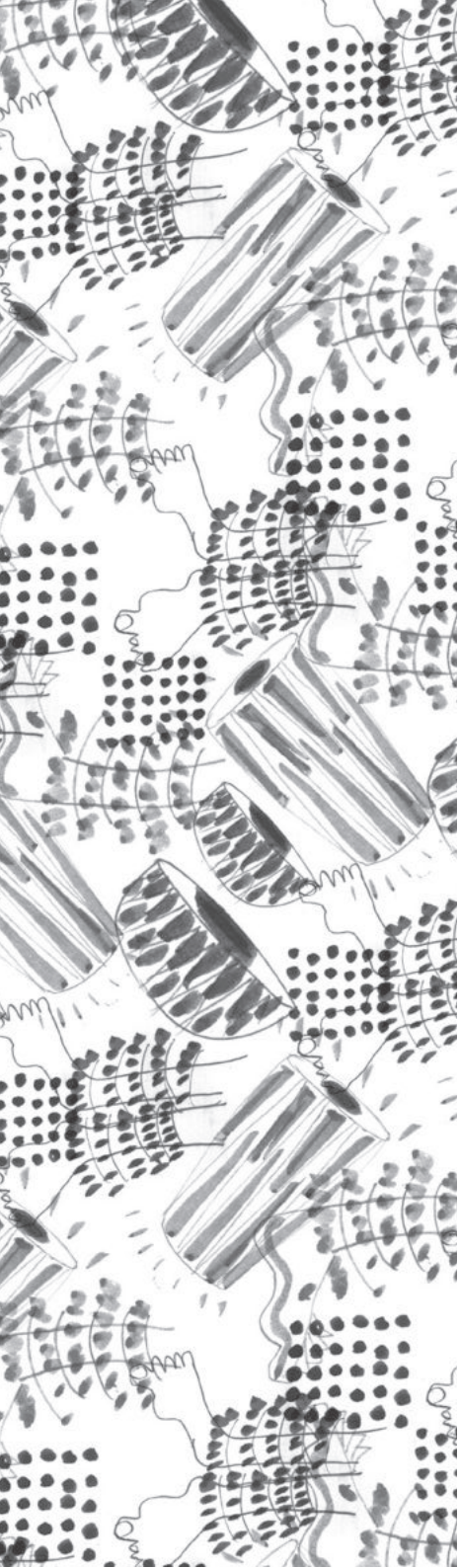
4. Story of a lizard, whose tail can create music equivalent to a number of instruments playing a symphony together. Once a crow approaches the lizard and requests her to give her tail to him. He says everybody hates his voice and the tail can help him make some friends. As the lizard can grow a tail again, she agrees. The new tail has a new talent. It can draw beautifully. And this time, a snake approaches her complaining he is unwanted by people. They think he is scary. If he could take the tail that can draw so well, everybody will like him.



This continues till the lizard realises that it is being taken advantage of and decided to use the new talent to earn money and become rich.

5. A group of puppets are lying in a corner of a house. They have been lying unused for some years now. Suddenly they open their eyes, wake up. They are concerned about their fate here in the house of a person who has given up puppetry. They decide to run away, in hope of finding a new house, a new puppeteer. As they secretly step outside the village and begin the journey, they come across a number of people. They meet an anthropologist who listens to them and offers them to come with him and let him write a book about them similarly, they meet a film-maker, TV producer, students, curator and so on. Slowly they all drift away from the group. And soon only a few (or one) remain.

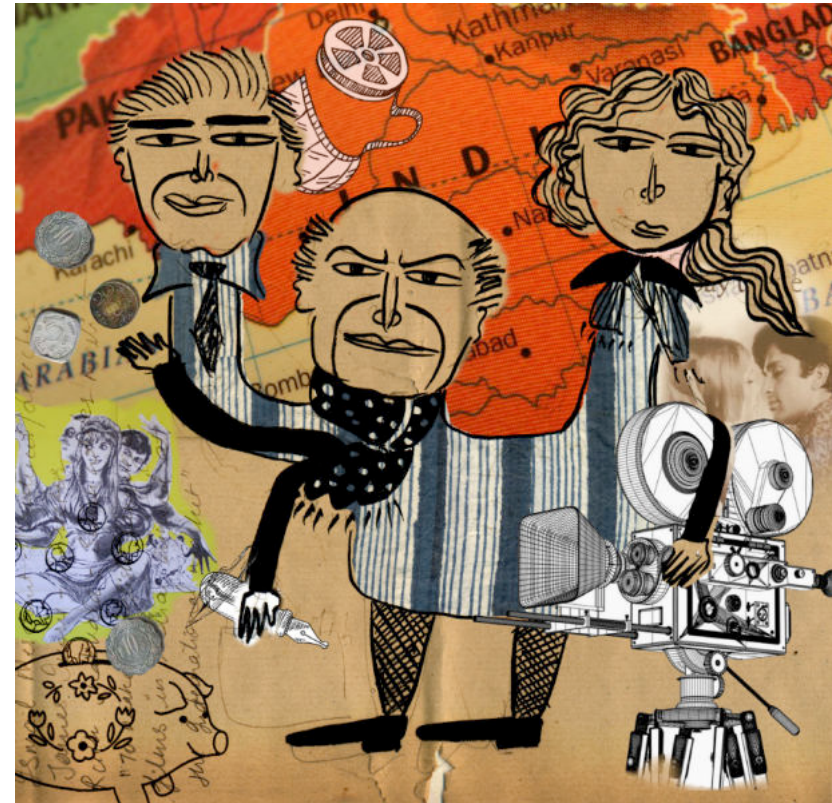




Final story concept

Out of all the story concepts, the last one seems most convincing to me. It is closest to the encounters I faced during the project. It does not only narrate the current situation. It brings forward, the outlook of different people who interact with the craftsmen. The story summarizes all the dwelling that happened after the research was over.

Characters for final story



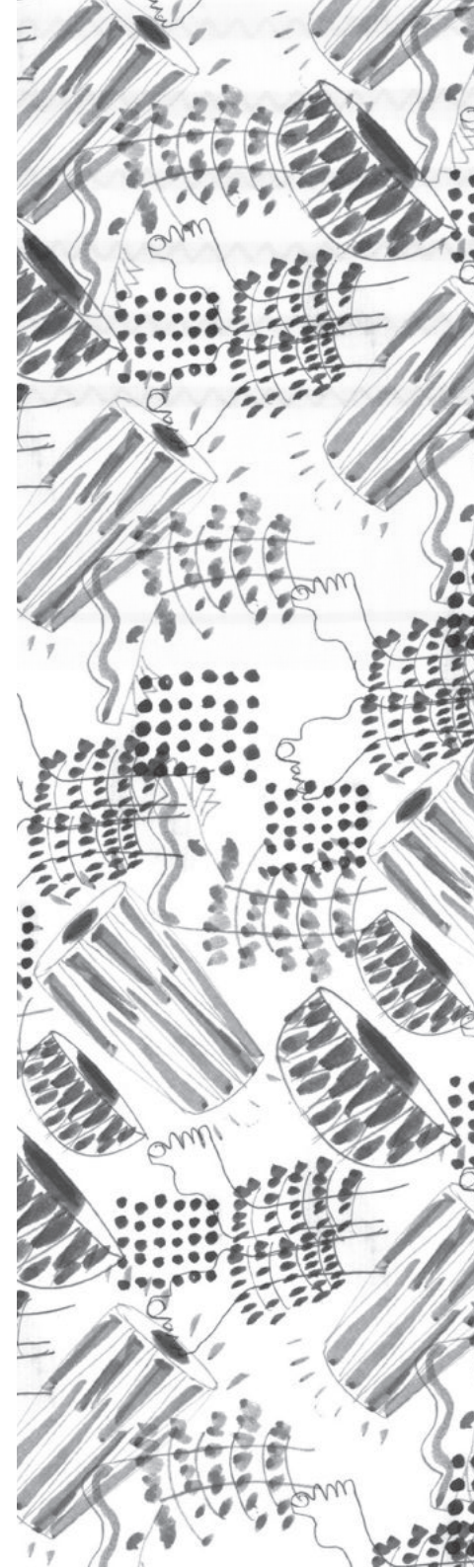
Merchant Ivory-Team of Ismail Merchant, James Ivory and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. They made english movies based in India in the 60s and 70s which were. Some of these were about the changes that happened to the traditional means of entertainment with the coming of cinema.

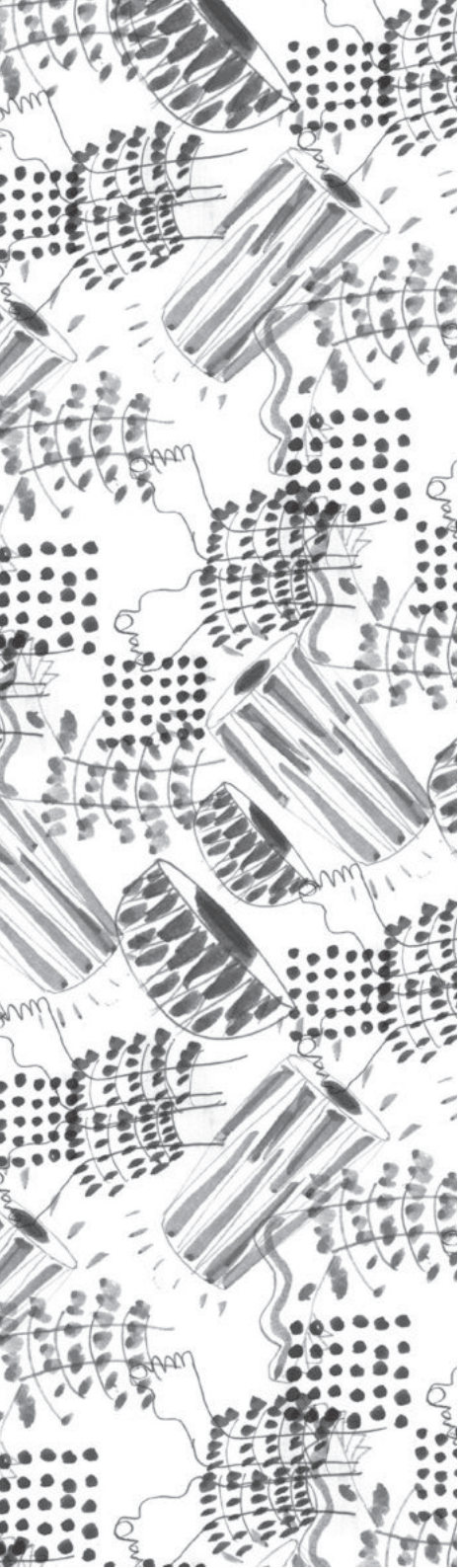


Christian Missionaries



Documentary film maker

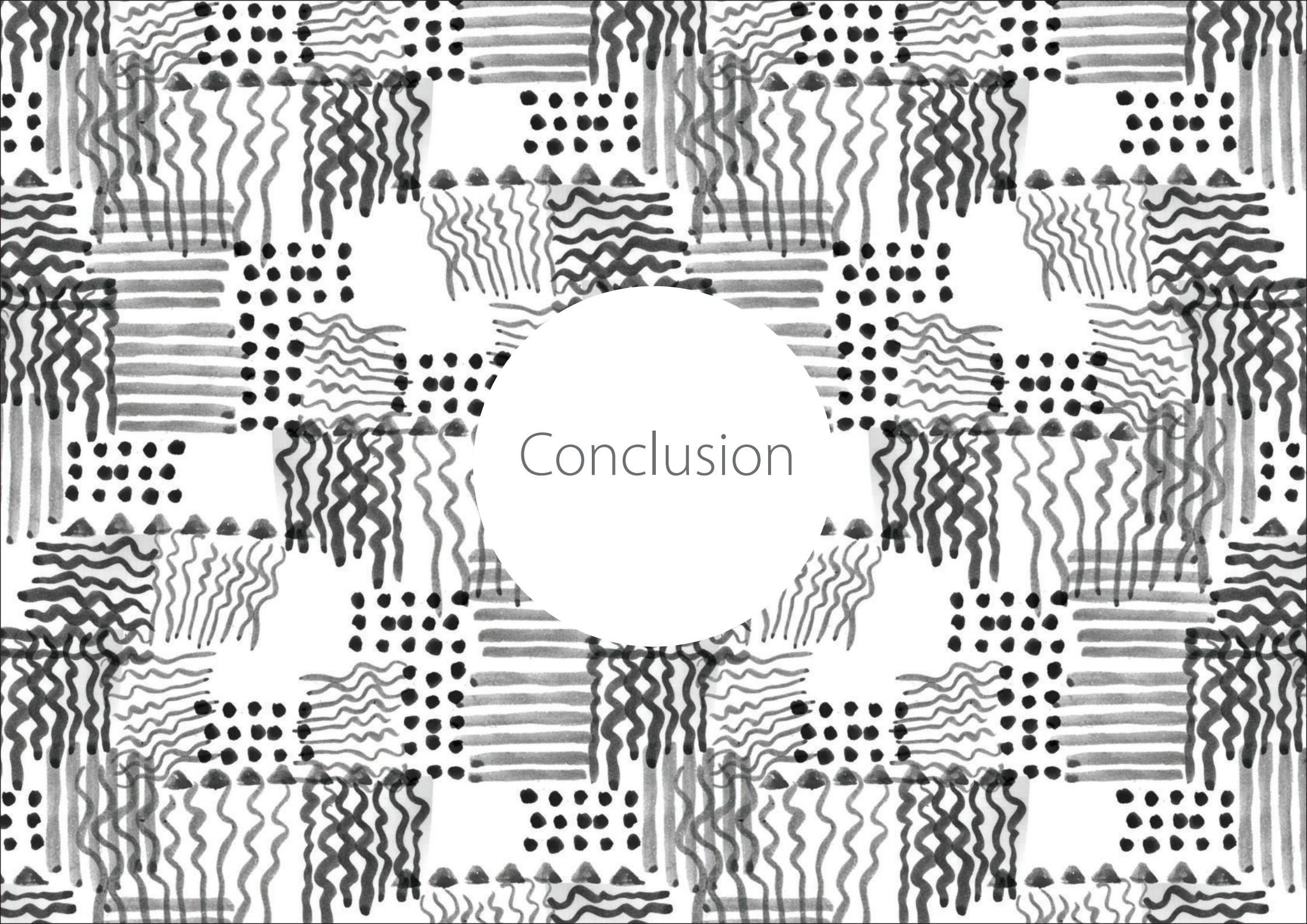




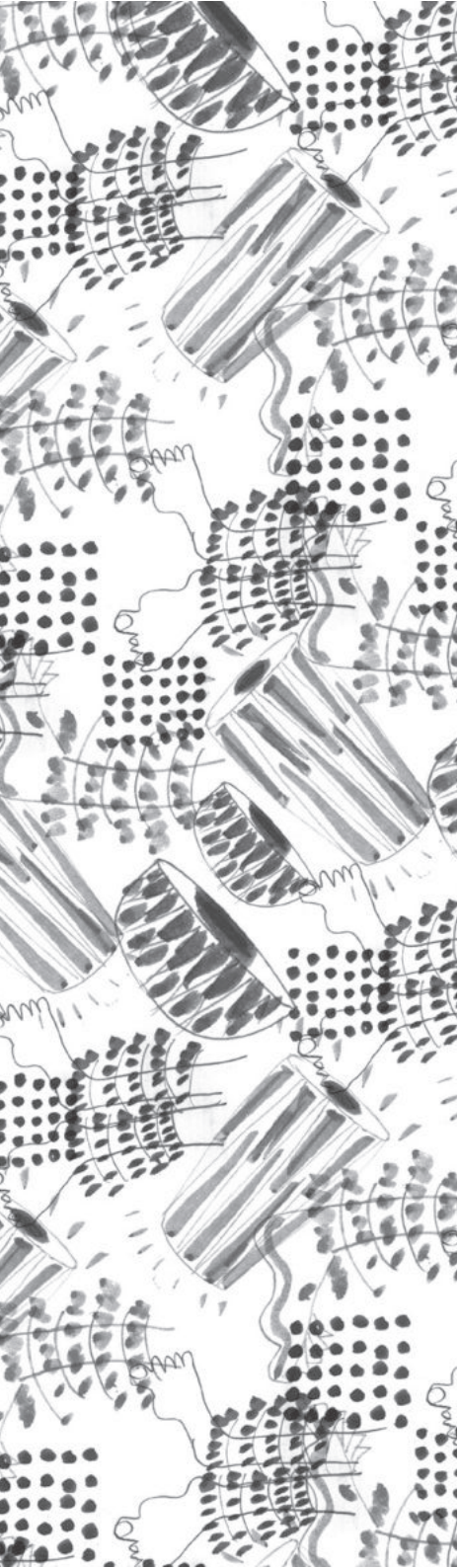
The government



Verrier Elwin, as mentioned earlier in the report.

The background of the slide is a complex, repeating abstract pattern. It consists of various geometric and organic shapes in shades of gray and black on a white background. These include vertical and horizontal bands of dots, wavy lines, and clusters of small triangles. In the center of the slide, there is a large, solid white circle. The word "Conclusion" is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font, centered within this white circle.

Conclusion



During May this year, I came across an article about a 'disappearing art form'. It said that only a few number of performers of 'Chadar Badar' remain.

Then in July, I decided to take it up as a project. I have had a liking for tribal arts and crafts and this was not the first time that I chose a project around it. But never really worked around a performing art. Which made it difficult for me to decide what to do with it. The article intrigued me to know more about this art form.

The first reactions that this topic received was that it sounds much like a 'research project'. And rightly so... as I did not say what I want to do with it other than enriching my own knowledge about it. Nonetheless, considering the academic timetable, a quick visit was planned to the home of Chadar Badar.

The analysis was disheartening. Firstly I didn't meet the artists. And then the other people, the villagers, the 'would be audience' for Chadar Badar, were found happy with televisions and mobile phones. The performers don't have a

temptation to perform as the audience does not have interest.

But this did bring a new perspective to the project. I started to rethink the purpose of the project and what is it that I want to convey through it.

I could off course introduce the puppetry form to a newer audience. But that has also been taken care of. There are documentaries, reports, websites etc. that talk about the art in detail. This brought me back to the question of defining loss and decline of this art form.

Further dwelling about the project led me to think about the big picture. That this is not the only art form that is going through such depletion. There are several traditions that have been lost due to changing lifestyles. So the concern of loss extends to them too.

The reason why lives of people are changing is progress. Every country aspires to progress. In order to make better infrastructure we are exhausting our natural resources. When cities

grow, they not only consume these natural resources but also the human resources. People from villages either move to cities, or these villages become the constant power stations that keep generating food, mineral resources etc. to keep the cities alive.

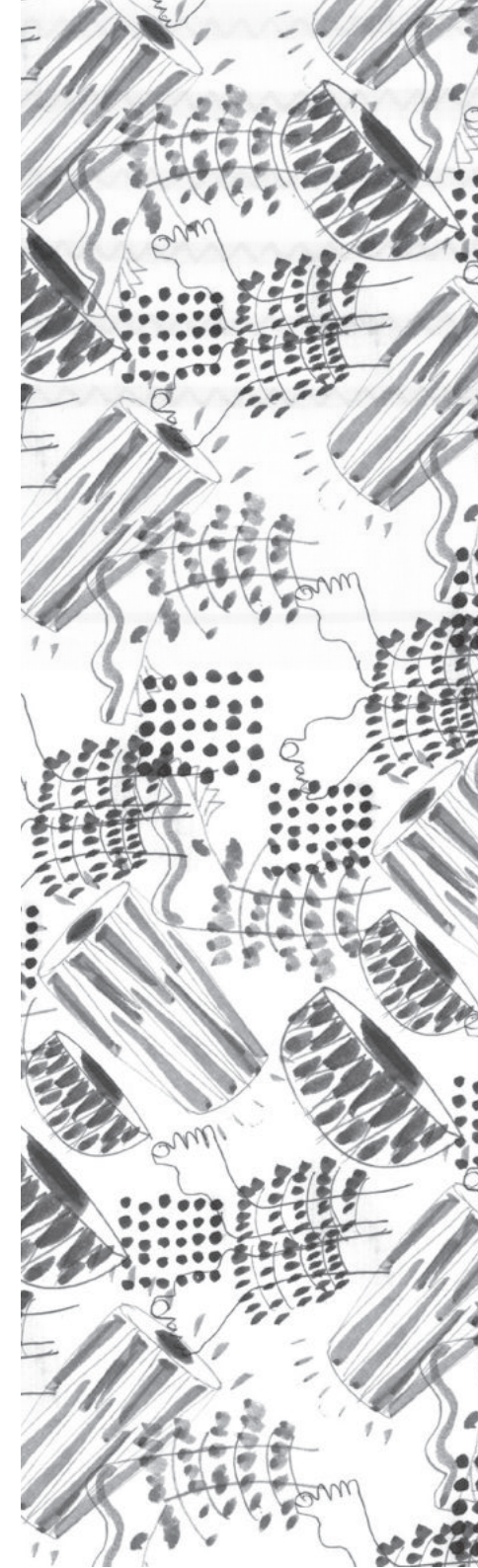
The question is- Is the growth just? Is it a fact that for some people to grow, some others will suffer? Instead of questioning the progress of the country, should we accept that certain cost will have to be paid? Is there another way that does not compromise on the progress but gives equal opportunities and justice to all?

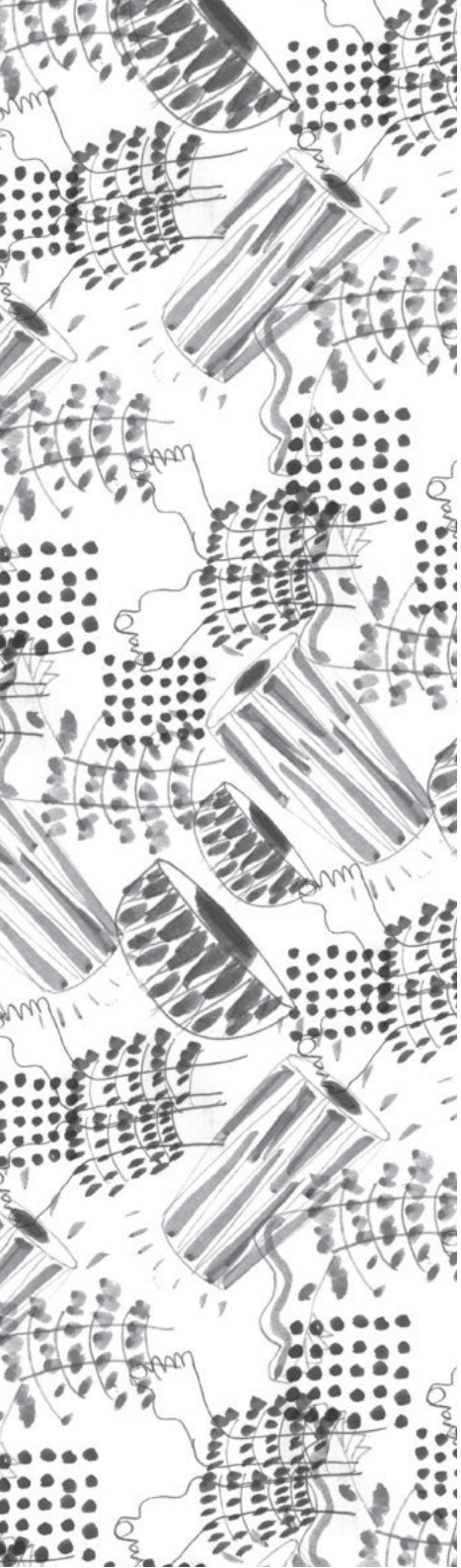
While mulling over these questions, I came across a number of people, writers, film makers, activists etc. who have responded to the situation in their own way. I could consider myself one of them, an outsider trying to figure out things for this art form. This again made me question do we really need to consider this withering away as a loss. Why should we cling on to something that is meant to be lost, or is destined to take a newer form. Since change

is inevitable. Maybe the changes are happening for a reason. And to say that we want to save the old ways of living could also be seen as carrying a certain baggage.

So what is the message that I want to give to the people. The narrative cannot be a piece of religious text that preaches them or tells them what is right and what is wrong. And as I am told, neither should it be merely reporting facts about what is happening and what the different perspectives are. Hence the project itself became a personal journey to figure out what was going on in my mind.

I am convinced that the last story summarizes the research, and my thoughts well. But it could always be a combination of all the stories. Even though it does not have a closure, in fact, none of the stories do. But I hope to bring justice to the project and myself by the time I finish working on it.





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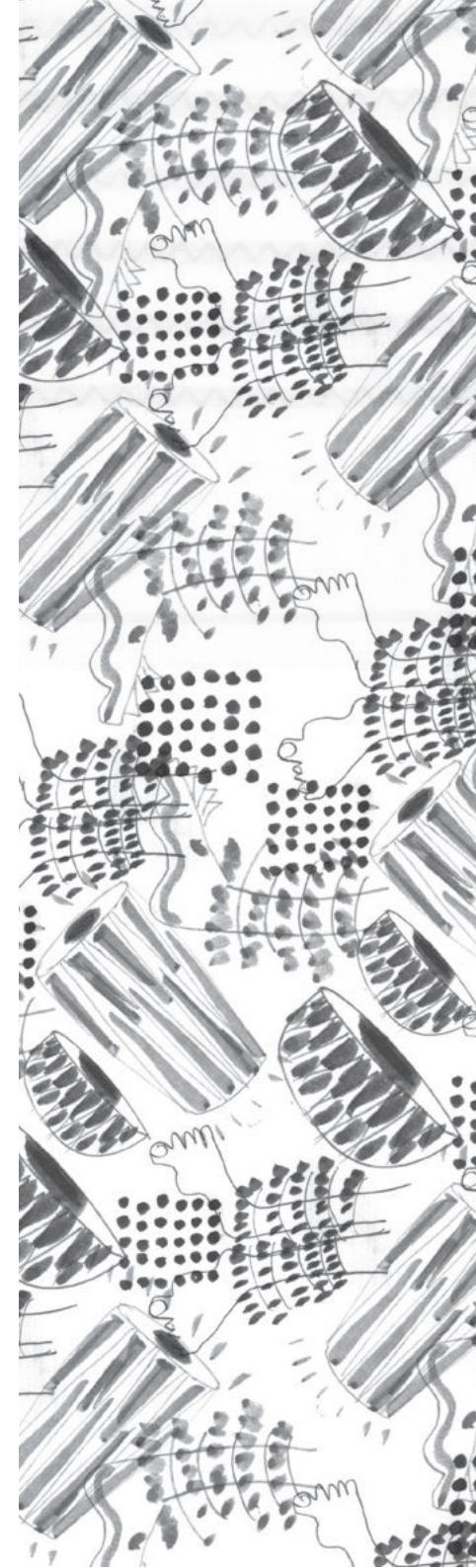
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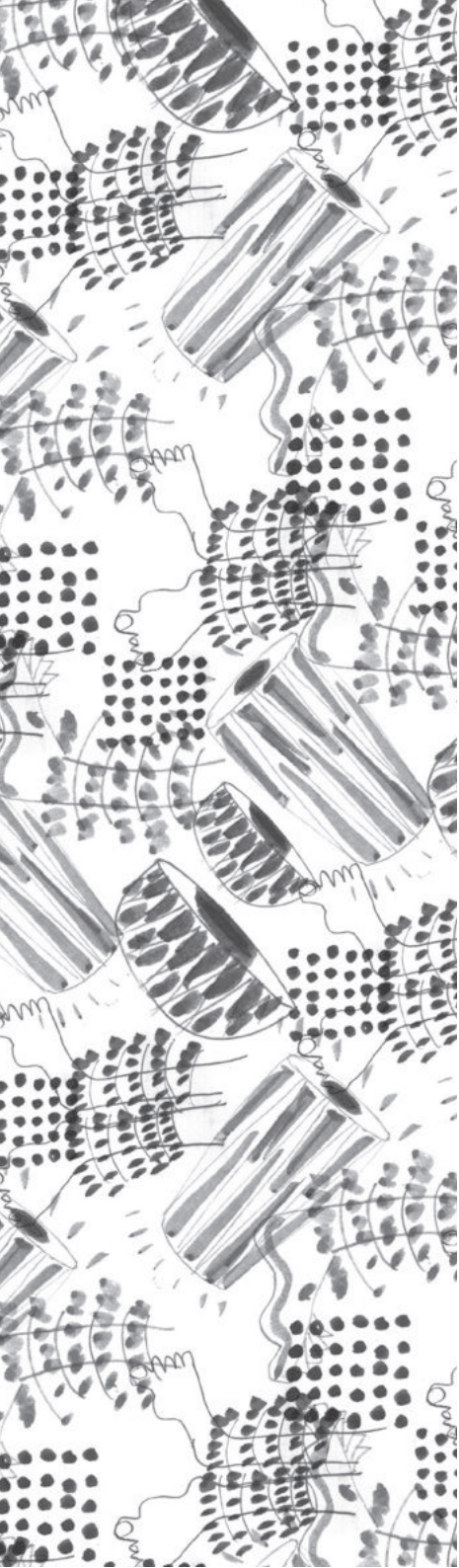
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Chadar Badar Photos:

- Johannes Beltz Marie Eve Celio Scheurer-
Cadence and Counterpoint: Documenting
Santal Musical Traditions
- Ashok Singh- Aadivaasi Kathputli Lok Kala,
Chadar Bada

PDFs:

- The Life of verrier elwin: [http://pahar.in/
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elwin-an-autobiography-by-elwin-s-pdf/](http://pahar.in/mountains/1964-tribal-world-of-verrier-elwin-an-autobiography-by-elwin-s-pdf/)
- Lokarana Vol. 8: [http://www.academia.
edu/14465932/Lokaratna_Volume_III](http://www.academia.edu/14465932/Lokaratna_Volume_III)
- Tribal History: [http://shodhganga.inflibnet.
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Films:

- The colour of Pomogranet
- Statues also die
- Shakespere wallah
- Nee Engey
- Letters from Korlai